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The Hamlyn History
of the World in Colour
Volume Nine

RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION

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Introduction

By J. R. HALE

The late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries form a fascinating period. This is not only because of the great intellectual, artistic, religious and economic forces that arose within it, and which have influenced our lives ever since, but also because it is the first period of history we can visualise with any clarity.

It was a time when many people voiced feelings recognisably akin to our own. The mastery of realistic techniques in painting and sculpture enable us to see their faces, houses, towns and even, to some extent, the countryside of Renaissance Europe. Moreover, the survival of personal correspondence, the growing habit of writing self-revealing autobiographies and the preserving effect of printing further enrich our knowledge of the way in which people lived during this time.

Scholars, many artists even, were increasingly conscious that their achievements had to be measured against those of the ancient Greek and Roman civilisations. At the same time Europeans, who suffered invasion from the east and were threatened from North Africa by the Turks, extended their knowledge and control of the world through the great voyages of discovery. The traders and colonists were soon to follow and, before long, had reached southern Africa, the Americas, India, the East Indies and Japan. The unparalleled extension of knowledge and opportunity brought by these discoveries was as much a tribute to the imagination, as it was to the courage and avarice of the men and the governments and merchant syndicates who backed them. Even the successes of space travel today are less inspiring, since the astronauts have more information before they set out, and their discoveries can have less immediate effect on men's lives.

The people of that time also lived in a period of religious turmoil. Not since the adoption of Christianity in Europe had men engaged in such a profound rethinking of the nature of worship and the significance of religion in everyday life. We have to wait until modern times, and the widespread acceptance of Marxism, before we can find issues which caused as much dissension as those between Catholic and Protestant.

It was not, however, an age in which we should find ourselves readily at home. Scepticism was unusual, atheism, to the overwhelming majority, literally unthinkable.

Yet we would recognise the cruelty and immoderation, the persecution of Jews, and the frightened intolerance of any minority view that threatened the political or economic status quo. Indeed, in some respects, we are better able to understand the sadder aspects of the period because of the tensions of our own time. However, it must be realised that there had been no Industrial Revolution on a scale which was to alter the whole way of life of large numbers of men and women. Europe was still overwhelmingly an agrarian society and in this respect, as in religion, the nature of Renaissance life was radically different from our own, even though its most important cultural achievements were centred on the towns.

It was a period of flamboyant individuals (like those rivals Henry VIII and Francis I of France), of artists like Leonardo and Michelangelo, of writers whose names, like Machiavelli, have become slogans.

A fresh look at this fascinating period is always desirable particularly in the form which is offered here. Dr Knecht not only tells the story but also takes note of the controversies between historians. These continually arise over this period, for history is not only a record of what happened in the past; it also depends on the manner in which it is interpreted and presented to us.

Treated briefly, the age must appear as one of constant, and frequently violent change. In politics we watch the changing fortunes of dynastic wars. Europe is transformed into an immense battleground, as Habsburg and Valois enlist the other western nations in their struggles. Italy, whose culture made it the most splendid and tempting prey, found itself a victim of these campaigns, which were waged on a vaster scale than any conflict in previous times.

Italy was not, of course, a unified country. The peninsula contained a number of mutually jealous states which lived restlessly together and were incapable of forming lasting unions which could keep out the armies of France, Germany and Spain. However, this lack of unity between the states brought about an extraordinary diversity which greatly enriched Italian Renaissance culture. Within Italy were to be found states not only with different governments and social structures, but also with varying intellectual attitudes. By the middle of the sixteenth century, though, only Venice and the Papal States had managed to retain their

freedom. Milan and Naples were Spanish dependencies and Florence had been forced to change from a republic into a duchy ruled by the Medici family which was dependent, if not formally, on Spain.

Fifty years ago this was looked on as a disaster. The republican freedom of Florence was contrasted with its enslavement, and Italy was seen as a nation left faint and bleeding from the guns and lances of its cut-throat neighbours. Coupled with this view was also the theory that the Italian Wars of 1494 had been responsible for spreading Italian civilisation from the early sixteenth century. Thus the legend grew up that Italy had to die in order that the rest of Europe might live.

Dr Knecht shows how this as well as other legends have been destroyed by new evidence. It has been shown that 'liberty' under the Florentine republic had scarcely a flavour of democracy, and that the rule of Cosimo, the first duke of Tuscany, was on balance, beneficial to his subjects. Moreover, Venice, though checked as an expansionist power, was neither grievously maimed by war nor destroyed commercially by the Portuguese spice trade round the Cape of Good Hope to India.

Equally, the Alps had never proved a barrier to the transmission of Italian humanism and artistic ideas to the rest of Europe. Indeed, Italian culture itself owed much to the importation of new ideas from the north. Finally, it has been recognised that in the sixteenth century Italy, far from dying, was the most potent cultural influence in Europe. The poets Ariosto and Tasso were more influential than Petrarch and Boccaccio (of two centuries before) as were the painters Andrea del Sarto, Primaticcio and Titian in comparison with Masaccio and Botticelli. Likewise, the architect Palladio had more influence than Brunelleschi.

This is only one aspect of the ways in which interpretations have changed and only one argument for a fresh look at the whole period. We can examine the nature of Tudor government, or the attitude of Spain towards the natives of the New World. We can investigate the reasons for the rise in prices which affected so many millions of people, or the causes of the civil wars which were to break France assunder within a century of its recovery from the Hundred Years' War. In all these we see a process of continuous revision of ideas previously held.

However, it must be remembered that, despite contrasts and revisions, any history must be selective, and the shorter the book the more drastically selective it is bound to be. Great men and important events are naturally the theme dealt with here—the nerves and muscles which moved the whole. The flesh is missing and we must imagine it. Few contemporaries were concerned with the great art of the time, few with the overseas discoveries and few even with wars. The great majority lived as their forefathers had done, without stirring more than a few miles from their homes in the countryside. They were more concerned with their harvest, and whether it would get them through the next year without actual starvation, than they were with the Mona Lisa's smile, or the capture of the king of France in battle.

It would be a poor introductory history that did not devote space to thinkers and rulers and did not suggest, as this book does, how the inarticulate masses were affected by economic and other forces over which they had no control. On the other hand it must be borne in mind that no single book can do more than help us to think about the quality of life four centuries ago. And an age which saw so many triumphs of man's imagination makes special demands upon our own.

THE RENAISSANCE

Scholarship	Art and Architecture	Overseas expansion	Political Events
1300	Giotto (1276-1336)		
Death of Petrarch (1374) Death of Boccaccio (1375)			
1400	Masaccio (1401-28) Brunelleschi (1377-1446) Donatello (1386-1466) Fra Angelico (1387-1455)	Portuguese capture Ceuta (1415)	Death of Giangaleazzo Visconti, duke of Milan (1402) Council of Florence (1438) Filippo Maria Visconti, duke of Milan (d. 1447) Election of pope Nicholas V (1447)
1450	L. B. Alberti (1404-72) Verrocchio (1435-88) Botticelli (1444-1510) Piero della Francesca (1416-92) Pollaiuolo (1429-98) Mantegna (1431-1516) Giovanni Bellini (1431-1516) Bramante (1444-1514)	Lopo Gonzalves crosses equator (1473) Bartolomeu Diaz rounds Cape of Good Hope (1488) Columbus' first voyage to the West Indies (1492) John Cabot reaches Newfoundland (1497) Vasco da Gama reaches India (1498)	Capture of Constantinople by Turks (1453) Peace of Lodi (1454) Election of Pope Pius II (1458) Lorenzo de' Medici head of Florentine state (1469-92) Lodovico Sforza seizes government of Milan (1480) Death of Louis XI of France and accession of Charles VIII (1483) Conquest of Granada (1492) Charles VIII invades Italy (1494)
1500	Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) Dürer (1471-1528) Giorgione (1478-1510) Carpaccio (d. 1523-26) Raphael (1483-1520) Holbein (1497-1543) Titian (1477-1576)	Balboa sights Pacific (1513) Spanish conquest of Mexico begins (1517) Magellan's circumnavigation (1519-22)	Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503) Pope Julius II (1503-13) Pope Leo X (1513-21) Pope Clement VII (1523-34) Sack of Rome (1527)
1550			



The Renaissance

An intellectual and artistic revival which begins in Florence spreads through Europe; it radically alters man's view of himself.

The word Renaissance can be interpreted in different ways. It is often used to describe a period of time, broadly the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in the history of Europe. Alternatively, it is applied more narrowly to a movement in literature, learning and the arts. This double usage has often led to confusion, for it has been wrongly assumed that everything that happened in the Renaissance as a period bore the imprint of the Renaissance as a cultural movement. In fact, the cultural Renaissance was not universal: it began in Florence in the fourteenth century and reached other parts of Italy and Europe only gradually.

The growth of the idea

The word Renaissance, meaning rebirth, was first used by the great French historian, Jules Michelet, in 1855. In its Italian form, *rinascita*, it can be traced back to a work of 1550 by the Italian artist and art historian, Giorgio Vasari. But the idea of a cultural

rebirth was expressed by a number of Italian authors in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. On the assumption that the fall of the Roman Empire had been followed by centuries of barbarism, they believed that they were witnessing a great revival of literature and the arts.

Boccaccio, writing about 1350, claimed that the painter, Giotto (c. 1266–1337), had 'restored to light this art which for many centuries had been buried under the errors of some who painted in order to please the eyes of the ignorant rather than to satisfy the intelligence of the experts'.

He praised Dante (1265–1321) for having restored dead poetry to life. The idea of rebirth was soon extended to sculpture, architecture and learning. Lorenzo Valla wrote,

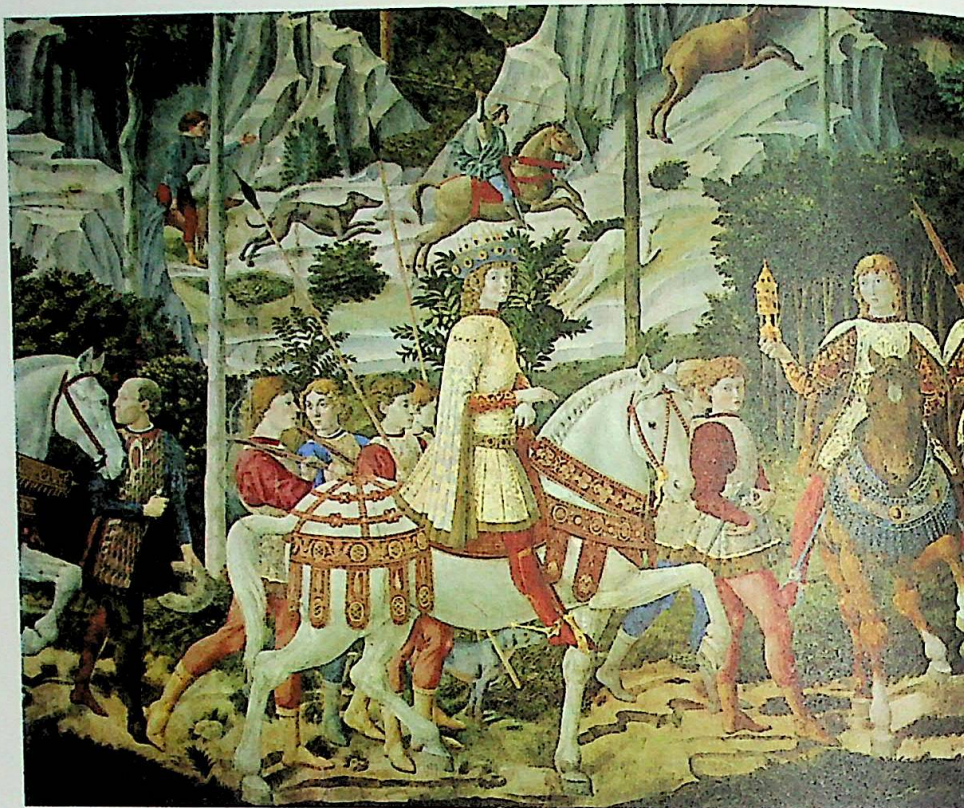
'I do not know why those arts which most closely approach the liberal ones—painting, sculpture, modelling, architecture—had been so long and so greatly in decline, and

had almost (together with literature) died out altogether; nor why they have revived in this age, and so many good artists and writers appeared and flourished'.

During the nineteenth century the Renaissance was given a much wider interpretation. Michelet described it as nothing less than 'the discovery of the world, the discovery of

Above: Lodovico Sforza, 'il Moro', duke of Milan (right) and his nephew, Gian Galeazzo (left). It was partly at Sforza's instigation that Charles VIII of France invaded Italy in 1494. Miniature. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

Right: the political and artistic life of fifteenth-century Florence was dominated by the family of Medici. Piero de' Medici (1416-69) is seen here in Gozzoli's fresco, The Adoration of the Magi, c. 1459. (Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, Florence.) Far right: portrait of Federigo da Montefeltro by Piero della Francesca, c. 1472. The duke's court at Urbino was one of the most cultivated in Italy (Uffizi Museum, Florence.) Centre top: allegorical figure bearing the arms of the Visconti. Miniature. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)



man', and in 1860, Jacob Burckhardt, the Swiss art historian, set out to capture the whole spirit of the Renaissance. In his classic work, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, he argued that it was in Italy that man first became aware of himself as an individual and that this was due to the place occupied by despotism in the Italian political system. When this individualism was combined with a powerful and varied nature it produced the universal man of the Italian Renaissance and provided the driving force behind the discovery of the world and of the full nature of man. But exceptional individualism predisposed the Italian to wickedness and scepticism.

Burckhardt belonged to a school of historians who liked to regard every event or movement as possessing a well-defined character of its own. For him the Renaissance was an isolated phenomenon, but other nineteenth-century historians preferred to trace the links between events and movements. As medieval scholarship got under way it became clear that the concept of a cultural rebirth in the fourteenth century rested on a false assumption. Culture had not died with the fall of the Roman Empire. It was found that medieval civilisation owed much to antiquity (e.g., Roman law and Christianity itself) and that medieval art was not as absurd as Vasari had imagined. The Middle Ages were not blanketed by religious uniformity and there had even been earlier Renaissances under Charlemagne and in the twelfth century.

Some medieval scholars inevitably began to question the very existence of the Renaissance, but this extreme standpoint is no longer upheld.

The modern view of the Renaissance

Scholars are now agreed that the Renaissance was basically a revolution in thought which began in Italy during the fourteenth century. It was characterised by the formulation of a new educational programme—the humanities—intended to prepare young men for an active life of service to the community. The medium of instruction was a Latin purified of medieval barbarism by the study of classical writers. The study of ancient writings became regarded as essential to a full life. The humanities comprised grammar, rhetoric and style, literature, moral philosophy and history. But those who taught these subjects—the humanists—were not simply educators: they wrote for each other and their concern for moral problems led them into the public domain. Some assumed a neo-Platonic philosophy which placed man at the very centre of the universe. The visual arts inevitably reflected this philosophical movement.

The Renaissance began in Italy probably because of the unique conditions that existed there in the Middle Ages. These included the absence of any strong feudal monarchy, the importance of town life, the preponderance of Roman law, the wide use of Latin



by the laity and the survival of many ancient buildings.

The Florentine Renaissance

The Renaissance can be said to have started in Florence in the fourteenth century. For centuries people had been taught to believe that the good life could be attained only by withdrawing from the world and its material wealth. In the fourteenth century, however, the Florentines put forward a different philosophy of life. They showed that an



active life in the world and possession of wealth were not incompatible with virtue. At the same time they advocated a new programme of lay education centred upon the study of classical Latin literature. Whereas in the past this had been frowned upon as pagan, it was now avidly studied for its own sake, not simply as a means to an end.

All this happened in Florence probably for political reasons. From about 1385 until 1440 it was almost a beleaguered city. For twenty years its chief enemy was the duke of Milan, Giangaleazzo Visconti, who died in 1402. The threat from Milan was followed by another from Ladislas, king of Naples. After his death in 1412 Florence had to face another duke of Milan, Filippo Maria Visconti. These enemies were dukes and kings, whereas Florence was a republic. Though its constitution was basically democratic, it was ruled in practice by an oligarchy of important merchants belonging to its seven major guilds. Yet civic respon-



Centre left: portrait of Petrarch (1304-74), one of the precursors of Italian humanism. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)



Right: Pope Sixtus IV (1471-84) built the Sistine Chapel and commissioned the leading Italian painters to decorate it. In this fresco by Melozzo da Forlì he is seen receiving the humanist 'Platina' who became keeper of the Vatican Library. 1477. (Vatican Galleries.) Above: Madonna by Antonello da Messina, the only important painter who worked in southern Italy during the fifteenth century. (Biblioteca Nazionale, Palermo.) Far right: The Piazza del Campidoglio, Rome, designed by Michelangelo in 1546. The five entry points are unified by a star-shaped pattern radiating from the base of the ancient statue of Marcus Aurelius in the centre.





sibilities occupied an important place in the lives of many Florentine citizens. The enemies of Florence looked back to the Roman Empire as the golden age. Giangaleazzo Visconti believed that peace depended upon the rule of a strong man.

Florentine humanism

It was in the course of its struggle against Milan and Naples that Florence became the centre of Renaissance humanism. Though essentially a literary and scholarly movement, this could be used for political ends. As students and teachers of rhetoric the humanists were admirably equipped to produce effective propaganda. Coluccio Salutati, who became chancellor of Florence in 1375, wrote innumerable letters and manifestoes in praise of the city as a bulwark of freedom against despotic oppression. His propaganda was so effective that Giangaleazzo Visconti was said to have considered his pen more dangerous than a detachment of Florentine cavalry.

Salutati's example was followed by his pupil, Leonardo Bruni, who was appointed chancellor in 1427. In one of his works he traced the Florentine love of liberty to the Roman republic, for he believed (contrary to medieval tradition) that the city had been founded by the republican Sulla, not by the imperial Caesar. Bruni applied to history the methods of textual criticism evolved by the humanists in their study of literature. He imitated Livy in his vast *History of the Florentine People*, but also made use of archives.

The important role played by public office in the lives of the Florentine patricians obliged them to consider the problem of the relative value of the active and contemplative life. While Petrarch had shared the preference for the latter, Bruni asserted that man 'achieves his perfection only in political society'. This new fusion of the active and contemplative was exemplified by varied groups of citizens who gathered round the learned Ambrogio Traversari in the 1420s. Not all the early humanists were creative scholars or professional writers. Some were book-collectors, notably Niccolò Niccoli, whose library contained more than 800 volumes. He received help for his book buying from the Medici bank and at his death he asked that his collection should be made accessible to the public.

The arts in Florence

Humanism was necessarily confined to a relatively small section of the Florentine population, but art and architecture had a wide appeal. The patronage of architecture which the commune shared with the greater guilds was often competitive. The bronze statues by Ghiberti and Donatello which adorn the facades of Orsanmichele, Ghiberti's bronze doors for the baptistery and Brunelleschi's cupola for the cathedral—all resulted from competitions. Meanwhile the great families of Florence commissioned artists to decorate their private chapels. The frescoes commissioned from Masolino and Masaccio by Felice Brancacci for his family chapel in Santa Maria del Carmine marked



a turning point in the development of Renaissance painting.

It was in Florence in the 1420s that a specifically Renaissance style in painting, sculpture and architecture was developed. Instead of adhering to the non-naturalistic style of an artist like Gentile da Fabriano, Masaccio set out to create the illusion of a three-dimensional world by means of perspective, controlled lighting and firmly modelled forms. Donatello was responsible for a parallel change in sculpture, while Brunelleschi discovered by studying Roman architecture that proportion is the essence of architectural design. The heroic style practised by these three men, however, soon underwent changes.

After Masaccio's death (c. 1427) Donatello's style moved in the direction of dramatic expressiveness, conveyed by the use of sharply delineated forms, dramatic gestures and distorted facial expressions. In architecture Brunelleschi developed a heavier classical style than he had used for his Foundling Hospital (1419). In the second half of the fifteenth century Florentine painting became characterised by a use of contour rather than modelling. While some artists like Pollaiuolo continued to seek naturalism, Botticelli was prepared to abandon it in his own search for perfection of linear harmony. Yet if perspective did not interest him, the draughtsmanship of his figures was more naturalistic than that of any artist of the fourteenth century.

The greatest Florentine patron of his day was Cosimo de' Medici, who dominated the

political life of the city after 1434. He took an active personal interest in the New Learning and in art. He rebuilt the convent of San Marco and gave it a great library, erected the noviciate of Santa Croce and continued the rebuilding of San Lorenzo. Yet Cosimo was restrained in his private building. His palace, designed by Michelozzo, served as the model for the houses erected by the Florentine patricians later in the century. Though strong enough to resist attack, they looked outward into the streets and formed an integral part of civic life.

The Renaissance is often associated with Lorenzo de' Medici, called the Magnificent. He was a man of letters and a collector of antique works of art and of manuscripts, but his architectural projects lagged behind those of other Florentine patricians like Filippo Strozzi. Lorenzo became virtually the ruler of Florence after the failure of the Pazzi conspiracy in 1478. This change in the political climate had philosophical consequences: the decline in republican institutions and civic values caused scholars to adopt a less active and more contemplative way of life.

Marsilio Ficino (1433-99), the leading spirit in the Platonic revival, believed that philosophical knowledge and moral perfection could be reached through contemplation. His villa, which he called Academy, was not an educational institution but a sort of club dedicated to the memory of Plato. Its membership was made up of professional scholars and leading citizens. As Ficino's reputation grew, scholars from



outside Florence came to join his circle of friends, the most important being Pico della Mirandola (1463-94), who derived his philosophical views from a wide variety of sources, including the Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical philosophy.

Alongside the complex and esoteric discussions of the Florentine Academy, humanism of a more traditional kind continued to flourish. Its chief exponent was Politian (1454-94), who combined admiration of classical literature with an appreciation of the Tuscan language as a literary medium. The influence of humanism on Florentine civilisation was all pervasive, so that both Politian and the Platonic school left their mark on the art of Botticelli. Narrow specialisation was absent from the civilisation of the age of Lorenzo.

The Renaissance in Florence was an indigenous movement which grew out of her society and political institutions. In other parts of Italy, where social and political conditions were different, it was often imported and superimposed by a ruler for his own pleasure and glorification.

The papacy and the Renaissance

In Rome the movement was bound up with the cultural interests and patronage of the popes. By his employment of the Tuscan humanists, Poggio Bracciolini and Leonardo Bruni, Pope Innocent VII (1404-06) established an important tradition of learned Latinists in the service of the papal

court. Poggio, who visited England in the course of his travels on ecclesiastical business, made a number of important discoveries among classical manuscripts in the great monastic libraries of Europe. He was also interested in the antiquities of Rome and built up a collection of ancient inscriptions and works of sculpture.

Rome in the early fifteenth century was a neglected and decayed city but Pope Martin V (1417-31) undertook a rebuilding programme which was continued by his successors more or less consistently.

An important event under Pope Eugenius IV (1431-47) was the summoning of a council with a view to reuniting the Greek and Roman Churches. It met first at Ferrara, then at Florence, and attracted to Italy a number of Greek scholars, notably Cardinal Bessarion (1403-72) who decided to spend the rest of his life in Rome. He was a great book-collector and presented his volumes to Venice, where many are still preserved in the Marciana Library. Greek, however, was never regarded as so important in the Renaissance as Latin, which Lorenzo Valla (1407-57) acclaimed as the universal language in his *Elegantiae*. Among his other achievements as a humanist Valla produced evidence to show that the *Donation of Constantine*, a document on which the papacy based its temporal power, was fraudulent.

Apart from promoting peace, Pope Nicholas V (1447-55) was chiefly concerned with 'books and buildings'. He was the founder of the Vatican Library and enlarged

its collection of manuscripts by employing many copyists and illuminators and by commissioning original works and translations from the Greek. Pius II (1458-64), who was himself a humanist, was also favourable to the arts and letters in Rome, but his successor, Paul II (1464-71), was intensely suspicious of classical studies. Members of the Roman Academy, a group of scholars who met at the house of the rhetorician, Pomponio Leto, were accused of heretical and pagan beliefs and practices.

Yet Pope Paul was not hostile to all aspects of the Renaissance. He collected antiques, medals and coins, built the Palazzo Venezia, the loggia of St Peter's and a new bridge over the Tiber, and supported the Vatican Library and University. The introduction of printing into Italy by Sweynheim and Pannartz during his pontificate facilitated the production of new editions and commentaries on the classics.

Though marred by nepotism, the pontificate of Sixtus IV (1471-84) was culturally

Below: the wealthy Florentine patricians commissioned artists to paint not only religious subjects but also scenes illustrating their own way of life. This painting of a wedding between the families of Ricasoli and Adimari provides a glimpse of the famous baptistery in the background on the left.

Above left: an enlargement of four musicians who appear in the picture below. (Accademia, Florence.)



one of the most brilliant. The Sistine Chapel was started and Rome was given new bridges, roads and squares. Among the artists and craftsmen who flocked there from Florence and from other parts of Italy were Signorelli, Botticelli, Perugino and Mantegna.

All this activity was sustained under the Borgia pope, Alexander VI (1492-1503), despite the unworthiness of his pontificate. The bellicose Julius II (1503-13) founded the new basilica of St Peter's to Bramante's design and assembled at the Belvedere statues and antiquities unearthed in excavations. Raphael was commissioned to decorate the Stanze della Segnatura and Michelangelo to execute the pope's tomb and to decorate the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

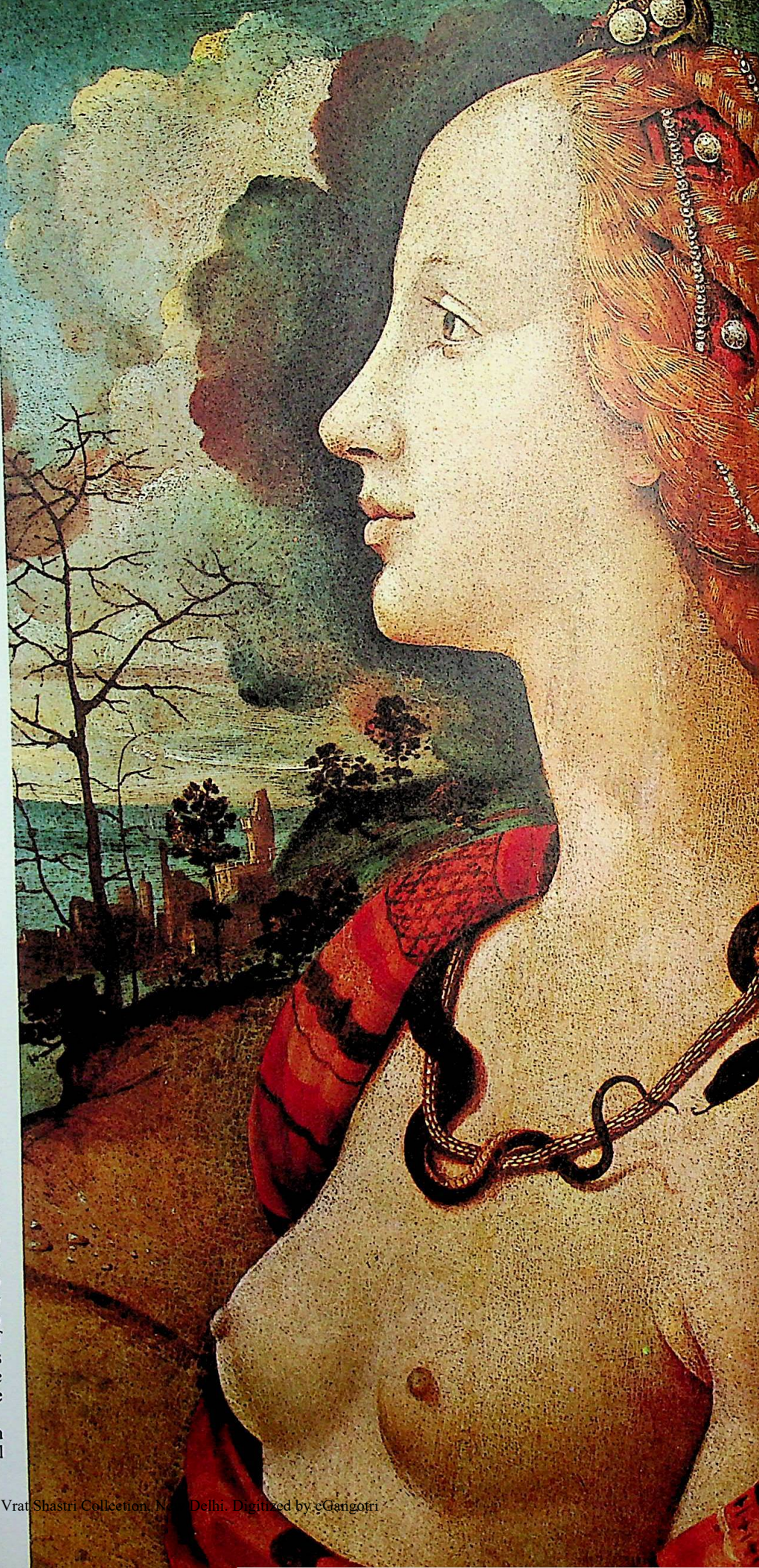
The Roman Renaissance reached its peak under the Medici pope, Leo X (1513-21). Building, both papal and private, continued on an unprecedented scale. Painting and architecture were represented by outstanding artists; Bembo and Sadoleto issued elegant Latin epistles from the papal chancery; the Vatican Library continued to grow under a succession of famous prefects. But all this was achieved without regard for the papacy's religious function. The reform of the Church was neglected and no effective response given to Luther's challenge. Nemesis came under Clement VII (1523-34) in the form of the sack of Rome (1527). Yet the Roman Renaissance did not really come to an end until the pontificate of Paul III (1534-50), when there was a reaction against the cultural values of the preceding epoch.

Naples and Milan

The Renaissance in Naples, though comparatively short-lived, was significant. It owed its existence largely to Alfonso V, under whose enlightened rule the traditionally quarrelsome Neapolitan baronage gave little trouble and the economy improved. Among the humanists who enjoyed his patronage was Lorenzo Valla (1407-57), and the tradition of scholarship was kept up by Alfonso's son, Ferrante, whose library became one of the most remarkable in Italy.

The chief figure of the Neapolitan Renaissance at its height was the humanist, Giovanni Pontano (1426-1503), who was also an able civil servant and diplomat. As a Latin poet he was surpassed only by Sannazaro (1456-1530). The only major painter who worked in southern Italy during the fifteenth century was Antonello da Messina (c. 1430-79). He was entirely cut off from the stream of experiment which started in Florence and spread to the rest of central and northern Italy. In fact he was closer to French or Flemish painters of the period, though there is no evidence that he ever went to Flanders.

It is often argued that the liberal arts can flourish only in an environment of political





freedom and the Florentines themselves made much of this argument. Nevertheless, it was under the despotic Giangaleazzo Visconti (1347-1402) that the Milanese first felt the impact of the Renaissance. A spectacular building programme was launched and official encouragement given to the University of Pavia, which became an important centre for the study of law. The Milanese Renaissance is associated particularly with Lodovico Sforza, *il Moro* ('the Moor'—from his second name, Maurus), who became duke in 1494. He was encouraged in his patronage by his wife, Beatrice d'Este. Leonardo da Vinci and Bramante were among the distinguished artists who joined his court and a contemporary wrote,

'The court was full of men of every skill and

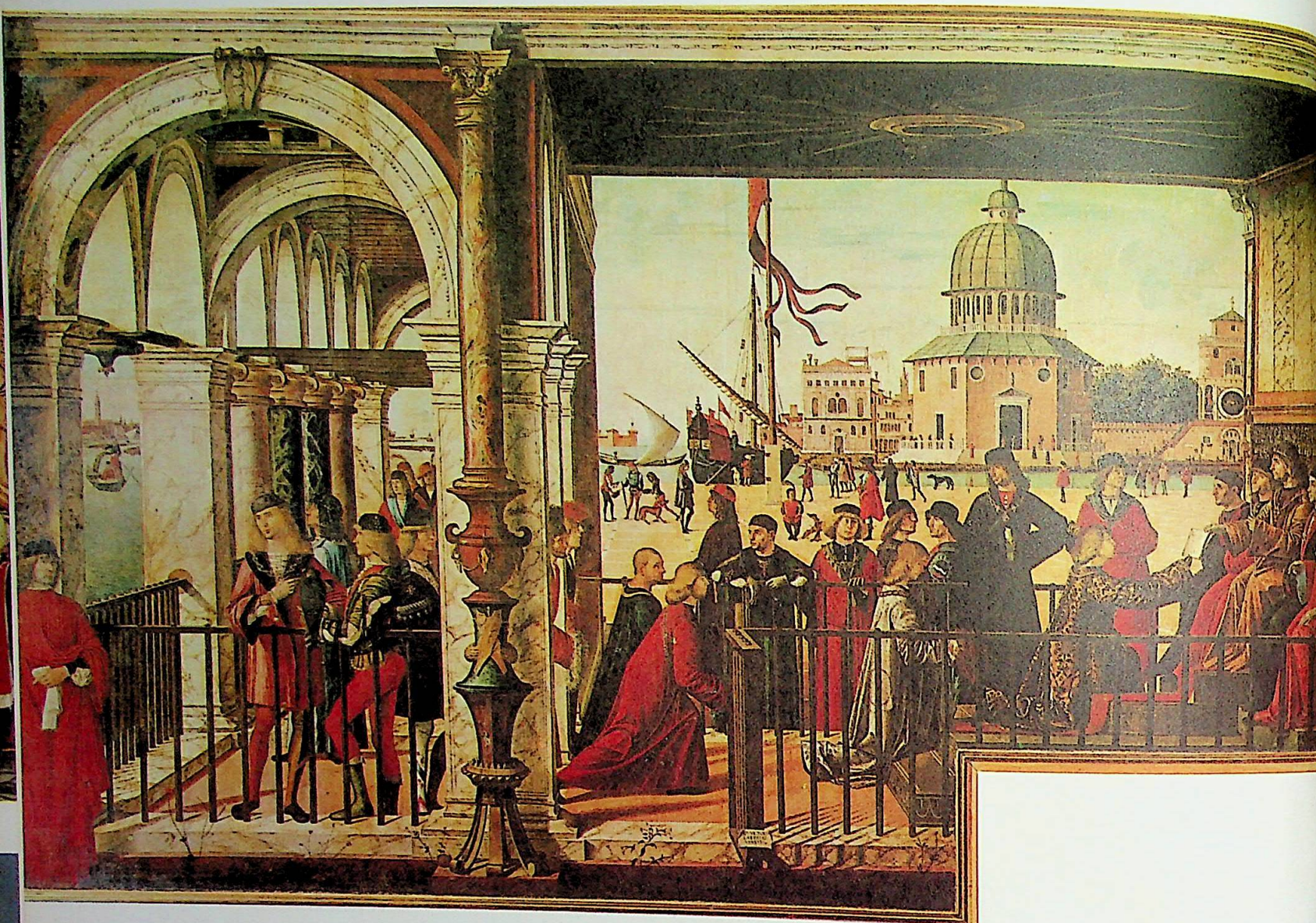
talent, especially musicians and poets and no month passed but they were to present, besides other things, some eclogue or comedy or tragedy or other new production or play.'

This brilliant period was cut short by the death of the duchess Beatrice in 1497 and the French occupation of the duchy in 1500.

Left: profile of a young woman by Piero di Cosimo (1462-1521). (Musée de Chantilly.)

Below: Two Courtesans by the Venetian artist Vittore Carpaccio (died 1523-6). Ruskin called this 'the best picture in the world'. (Correr Museum, Venice.)





Ferrara, Mantua and Urbino

Before the ideas of the Renaissance could take root they needed to be embodied in educational theory and practice. The key figures in this work were two great schoolmasters, Guarino da Verona and Vittorino da Feltre. Both studied Latin in and around Padua in the late fourteenth century. Guarino also studied Greek and visited Constantinople. Eventually both men established schools which were associated with princely courts.

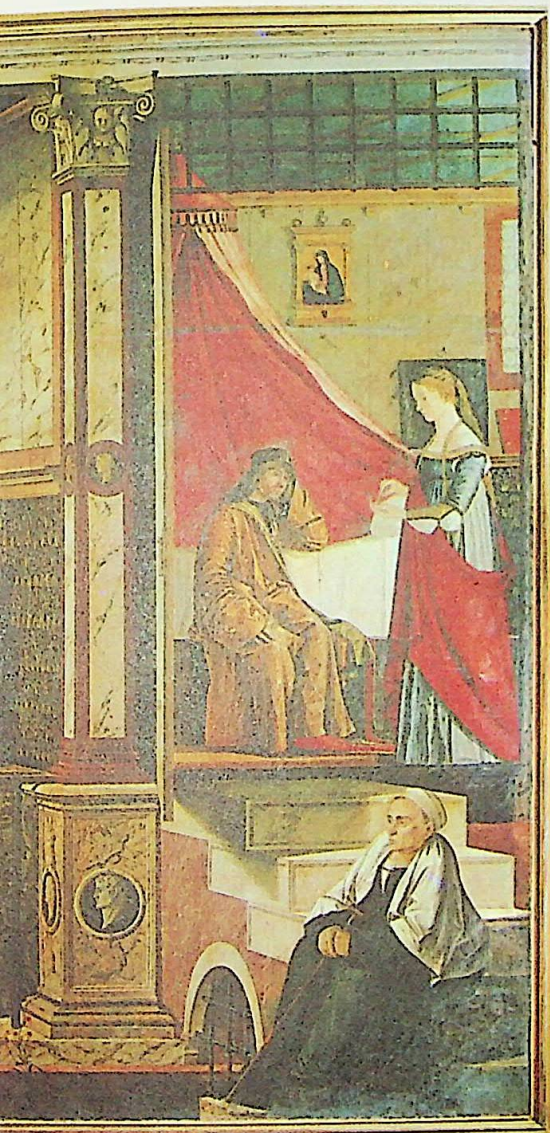
Vittorino taught at the Gonzaga court in Mantua from 1373 to 1446 and Guarino at the Este court in Ferrara from 1429 to 1460. Their pupils included middle-aged men as well as teenagers, poor children as well as sons of the nobility. The aim of their teaching was to encourage the full development of the individual through the study of the classics and a combination of moral and physical instruction. It was on this ideal that European education was to be based for centuries.

Among the pupils of Guarino and Vittorino were three important patrons of the Renaissance: Leonello d'Este duke of Ferrara (1441-50), Lodovico Gonzaga duke of Mantua (1444-78) and, most famous of all, Federico da Montefeltro duke of Urbino (1444-82).

It was under Leonello d'Este that Ferrara became a great centre of Italian poetry. Ariosto (1474-1533), the author of *Orlando Furioso*, which has been called 'the most perfect poem of the Italian Renaissance', spent most of his life there. In the late sixteenth century this literary tradition, which also extended to drama, was upheld by Tasso (1544-95).

Lodovico Gonzaga imported the artistic ideals of the Renaissance into Mantua. The Florentine architect Leon Battista Alberti (1404-72), designed the churches of Sant'Andrea and San Sebastiano. Among his many accomplishments (it is recorded that he could jump over a man's head with his feet close together!) he wrote a treatise on painting and another on architecture





modelled on Vitruvius, the newly rediscovered Roman writer on architecture. Alberti was not just a dry theorist; he had an imaginative and creative mind. His design for San Sebastiano prompted a cardinal to remark 'I can't see if this is going to turn out to be a church, or a mosque or a synagogue'. Lodovico was also the patron of the painter, Andrea Mantegna (1430-1506), whose austere classicism provides a link between the work of Donatello in Florence and that of Giovanni Bellini in Venice.

The Renaissance in Mantua continued under Duke Francesco II (1484-1519) whose wife, Isabella d'Este, received praise from the most famous writers of the day for her enlightened support of poetry and drama. In 1524 Duke Federigo invited Raphael's pupil, Giulio Romano, to undertake work at Mantua. He drained the marshes, restored many buildings and built the Palazzo del Tè in the style called Mannerism, a self-conscious flouting of the classical principles followed by earlier architects of the Renaissance.

Federigo da Montefeltro is well known because of his unforgettable broken-nosed profile painted by Piero della Francesca. In the course of his reign (1444-82) he consolidated and trebled the size of his duchy of Urbino, which remained nevertheless one of the smaller Italian principalities. As a *condottiere*, or soldier of fortune, he could command a high price for his services for he was trustworthy, prudent and kept good discipline among his troops. He is remembered, not for his battles, however, but for his transformation of Urbino into one of the chief cultural centres of Europe. The library which he collected was unrivalled. Vespasiano da Bisticci wrote,

'He spared neither cost nor labour and when he knew of a fine book, whether in Italy or not, he would send for it. It is now fourteen or more years since he began the library, and he always employed, in Urbino, in Florence, and in other places, thirty or forty scribes in his service . . .'

The duke was a competent Latinist and an enthusiastic supporter of Greek studies. His cultivated tastes were embodied in his famous palace at Urbino, designed by Luciano di Laurana. According to Castiglione, who chose Urbino as the setting for his delightful *Book of the Courtier* (1528), the palace was so well furnished by the duke that 'it seemed not a palace but a city in the form of a palace'.

Carpaccio was much employed by the scuole or confraternities of Venice. His charm and narrative gift are well displayed in his cycle on the Life of St Ursula (1490-95). Here we see the Reception of the Ambassadors (above) and their Return (below). (Accademia, Venice.)

Venice

Renaissance ideas reached Venice later than elsewhere. By the end of the fifteenth century, however, it had become an important centre of the book trade. Aldus Manutius (1450-1515), who specialised in Greek texts, was one of the outstanding scholar-printers of the age. In the arts the golden age of Venice was the sixteenth century when painting was represented by the Bellinis, Giorgione, Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese, and architecture by Sansovino and Palladio.

The city was also important for its music. The Venetian calendar was punctuated by great religious and secular festivals, during which the doge and Senate would go in procession to the basilica of San Marco where music was provided by two organs and two choirs. The greatest musician associated with Venice was Claudio Monteverdi who came there from Mantua in 1611, probably to supervise the performance of his *Vespers*.

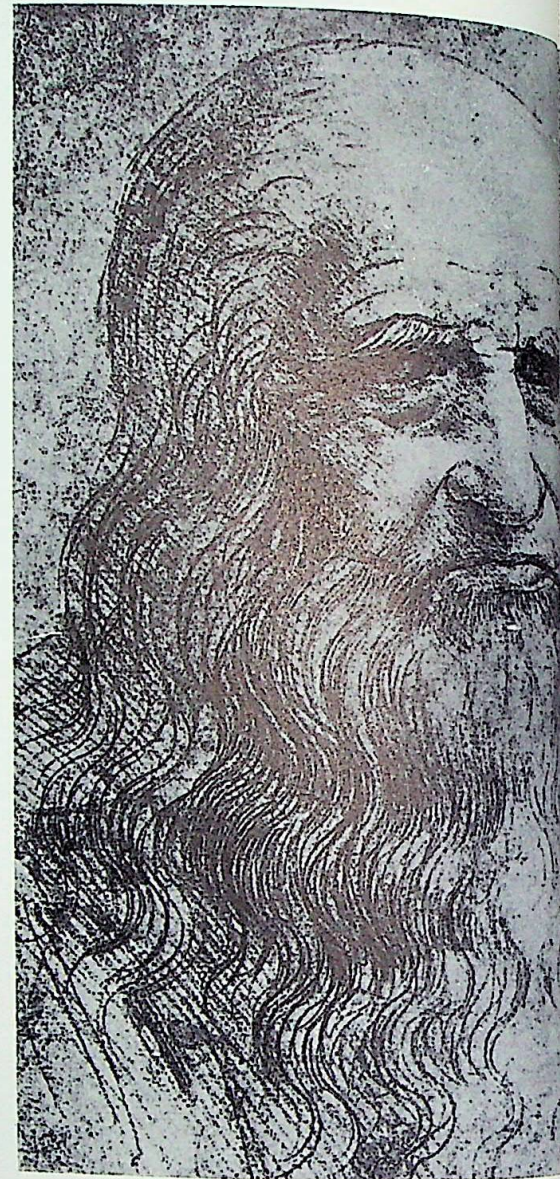
Leonardo da Vinci

The two outstanding artistic geniuses of the Renaissance are undoubtedly Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) and Michelangelo (1475-1564).

Leonardo showed unusual gifts from his earliest years and was placed by his father, a Florentine lawyer, in Verrocchio's studio. In his early works, more particularly his drawings, Leonardo tried to adapt his fleeting visions to the severe standards of academic Florentine art with its overlapping traditions of linear grace and fancy (e.g. Botticelli) and of scientific naturalism (e.g. Verrocchio).

In 1482 he went to Milan after recommending himself to the duke almost exclusively as a military engineer. His earliest notebooks contain drawings of engines of war. Architecture also interested him but his plans and elevations of domed churches were probably not intended to be built. He compiled notes on the art of painting and made numerous studies of the human body.

In addition to painting portraits and supervising small engineering projects, Leonardo undertook two important works for the duke of Milan: an equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza and the mural of *The Last Supper* in the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie. He made a full-scale model of the statue in clay in 1493 but the monument was never completed. *The Last Supper*,



despite its appalling condition, bears witness to Leonardo's inventive genius. Whereas earlier painters had chosen the moment of communion, Leonardo's treatment would seem to depict the terrible moment when Christ says 'one of you will betray me'.

In 1500 Leonardo returned to Florence and it was during the next five years that he painted 'Mona Lisa', the wife of an obscure Florentine citizen. In her famous smile Leonardo achieved his aim of capturing and fixing the complex inner life in durable material. When he returned to Milan in 1508 he was employed in various capacities by the French governor, Charles d'Amboise. His frequent travels during these years enabled him to observe nature closely. After the expulsion of the French in 1512 Leonardo went to Rome. Finding the atmosphere distasteful, however, he retired into melancholy solitude until 1516 when he accepted Francis I's invitation to settle in France where he died three years later.

Michelangelo

Michelangelo was the son of an impoverished Florentine gentleman. After serving as an apprentice in the studio of the painter, Ghirlandaio, he joined Lorenzo de' Medici's school of sculpture under Bertoldo and produced works which tried to rival those of antiquity. In 1496 he went to Rome and produced his first major work, the 'Pietà', which broke new ground by combining two life-size marble statues in one group. After returning to Florence in 1501 he carved his famous *David*, the final expression of fifteenth-century Florentine naturalism. Michelangelo also painted his *Holy Family* at this time.

In 1504 he was commissioned by the Florentine republic to paint a large fresco in the Palazzo Vecchio. By showing an incident from the Pisan War in which soldiers were surprised while bathing he was able to introduce a wide variety of move-

ment into his treatment of the human body. Michelangelo was the first artist to reveal the body in its entire range of action.

Julius II then commissioned him to work on his tomb, a project which was to occupy him on and off for forty years. He was soon diverted, however, to decorate the vault of the Sistine Chapel. Despite extremely difficult conditions he finished this 'tremendous biblical symphony' in a remarkably short space of time. The original design for Julius II's tomb was never completed, and Michelangelo was responsible only for the awesome statue of Moses in the present monument.

Michelangelo's career as an architect began in 1520 with the Medici chapel at San Lorenzo in Florence, in which architecture and sculpture were intended to complement each other. By his unorthodox treatment of classical themes he prepared the way for the Baroque style. The dome of St Peter's was among his subsequent architectural works.

His last major painting, *The Last Judgment*, on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel, showed by its command of movement in space the course Italian art was to follow in the next century.

The Renaissance outside Italy

Renaissance Italy was not cut off from the rest of Europe. Rome was the centre of the international Church and the universities of Padua, Bologna and Salerno (to mention only a few) were famous for the study of law or medicine. There was a continuous traffic of churchmen and students between Italy and other countries, so that the Renaissance was almost bound to be exported sooner or later. But it was never copied exactly. In every country it was blended with native elements. In architecture, for example, classical themes like columns, pilasters and pediments were at first added to the façades of buildings which remained structurally Gothic. Only gradually did classicism become integrated into the architecture of northern Europe. And the same kind of compromise occurred in scholarship where humanism had to establish itself alongside the medieval scholastic tradition.

Signs of an interest in the New Learning appeared in France in the 1450s when two Italians, Tifernate and Beroaldo, lectured in Paris. A printing press in the cellars of the university of the Sorbonne began to produce editions of classical and humanistic texts. The most important of the early French humanists was Robert Gaguin, who wanted knowledge and eloquence to serve theology. This alliance of humanism and theology was one of the characteristic features of the northern Renaissance. Later in the century Greek studies were introduced into France by George Hermonymos and John Lascaris. In the work of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (c. 1450–1536) classical learning became combined with mysticism. His scholarship was surpassed by that Guillaume Budé (1468–1540), whose works on the Roman coinage and the *Pandects* (the fifty books of Roman civil law which Justinian ordered to be drawn up in the sixth century A.D.) were remarkable even by Italian standards.

Far left: the great Dutch humanist, Erasmus, who stood for peace and toleration in a turbulent world. Portrait by Hans Holbein the Younger, whose ability to depict character was unrivalled. (Louvre, Paris.)

Centre: self-portrait by Leonardo da Vinci. It may date from 1512 when he was only sixty. This is his only authentic likeness. (Turin Library.)

Right: in the Rondanini Pietà, begun c. 1556, Michelangelo rejected realism while investing his subject with a tragic intensity. (Castello Sforzesco, Milan.)



The cradle of English humanism was the household of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, who employed Italian secretaries. He was an enthusiastic bibliophile and gave many books to Oxford University. Partly because of his encouragement, a number of young Englishmen went to study in Italy. By the end of the fifteenth century the principal exponents of humanism in England were William Grocyn, John Colet, Thomas Linacre and Sir Thomas More, whose *Utopia* showed that it was no longer essential for an Englishman to study in Italy to become an accomplished humanist.

Antiquarianism was one of the keynotes of German humanism. Scholars sighed after a German past which in their view was as great if not greater than that of Rome.

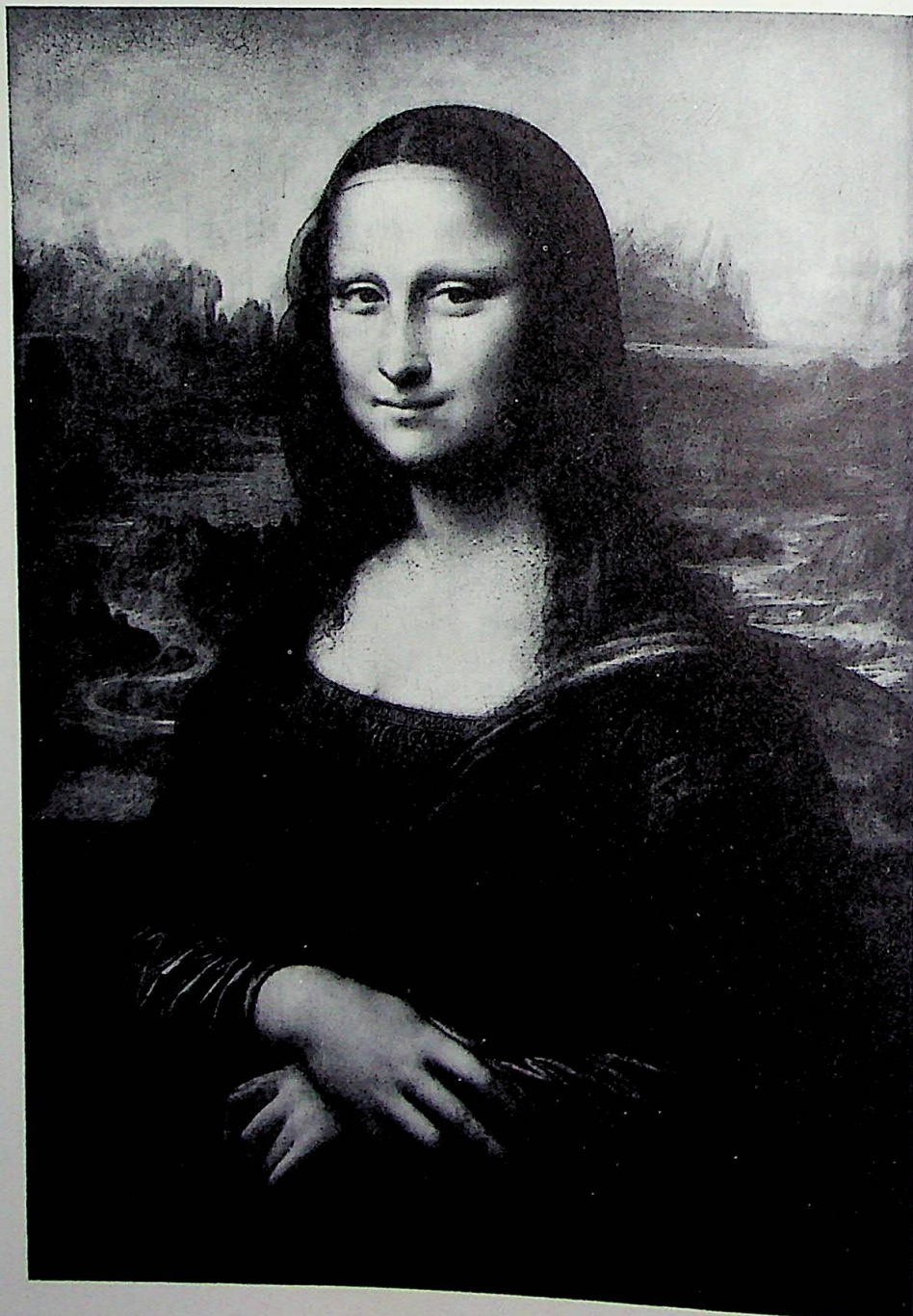
While Conrad Celtis rescued texts proving that his countrymen had not been illiterate in the Middle Ages, Peutingger collected ancient German inscriptions. With the appearance of Luther humanism was able to supply his movement with a strongly nationalistic propaganda against Rome.

Spain too felt the influence of the Italian Renaissance. Antonio de Nebrija (1444–1522) applied its lessons to fields of scholarship ranging from historiography to biblical studies. His patron, Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros, was responsible not only for the foundation of the university of Alcalá de Henares (1508) but also for the publication of the *Complutensian Polyglot Bible*, in which the text was printed in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin.

One of Leonardo da Vinci's chief artistic aims was to capture the complex inner life and to fix it in durable material. This he achieved perfectly in his portrait of Mona Lisa, the wife of an obscure Florentine citizen, painted in 1503. The rocky background exemplifies the artist's reaction to the neat, man-made landscapes of his Florentine contemporaries. (Louvre, Paris.)

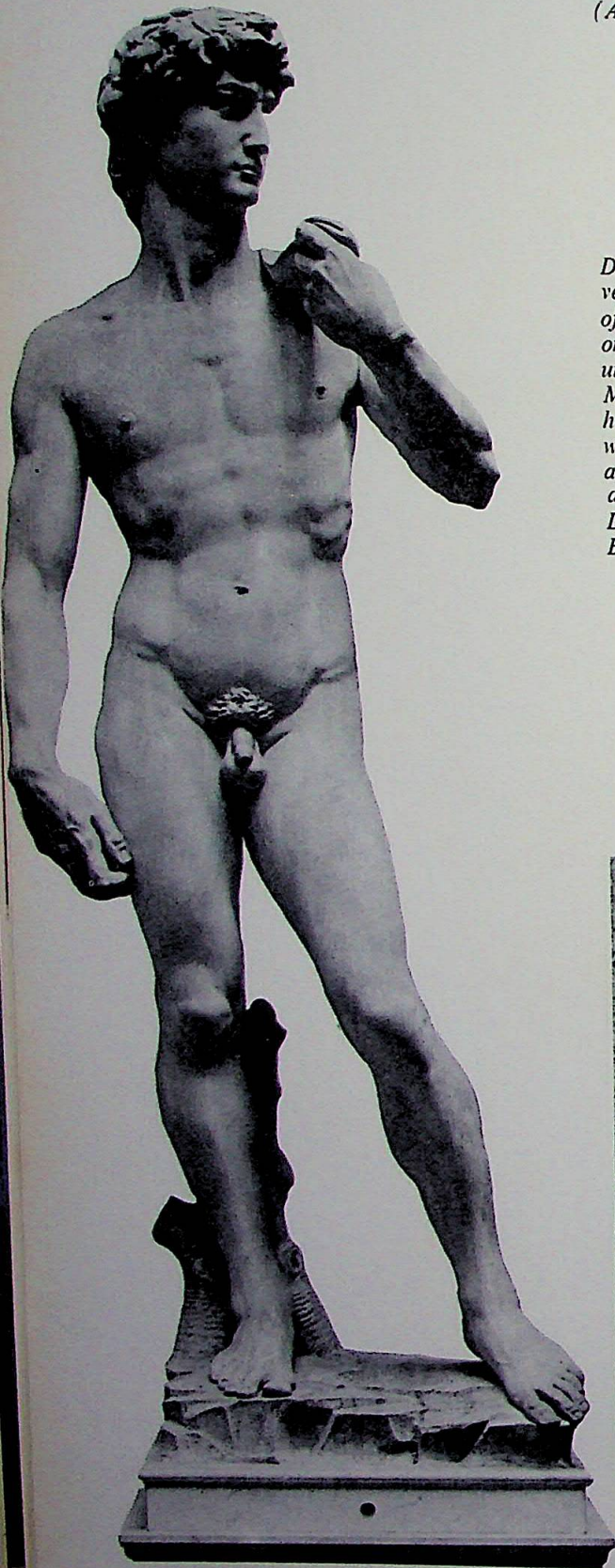


Moses: in 1505 Michelangelo was ordered to design and execute the greatest tomb in Christendom for Pope Julius II. The project dragged on for forty years as the artist was unable to give his undivided attention to it. Moses was intended as one of more than forty statues for the tomb and was described by Vasari as 'unequaled by any modern or ancient work'. (San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome.)



Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper of c. 1497 has been heavily restored, yet some magic of the original survives. It is distinguished from earlier representations of the same subject by its qualities of unity and drama. (Refectory of Sta Maria delle Grazie, Milan.)





In his sixteen-foot tall statue of David, completed in 1504, the young Michelangelo expressed the pride, vigour and austere idealism of the Florentine republic. It was placed in front of the Palazzo della Signoria, the centre of government. (Accademia, Florence.)

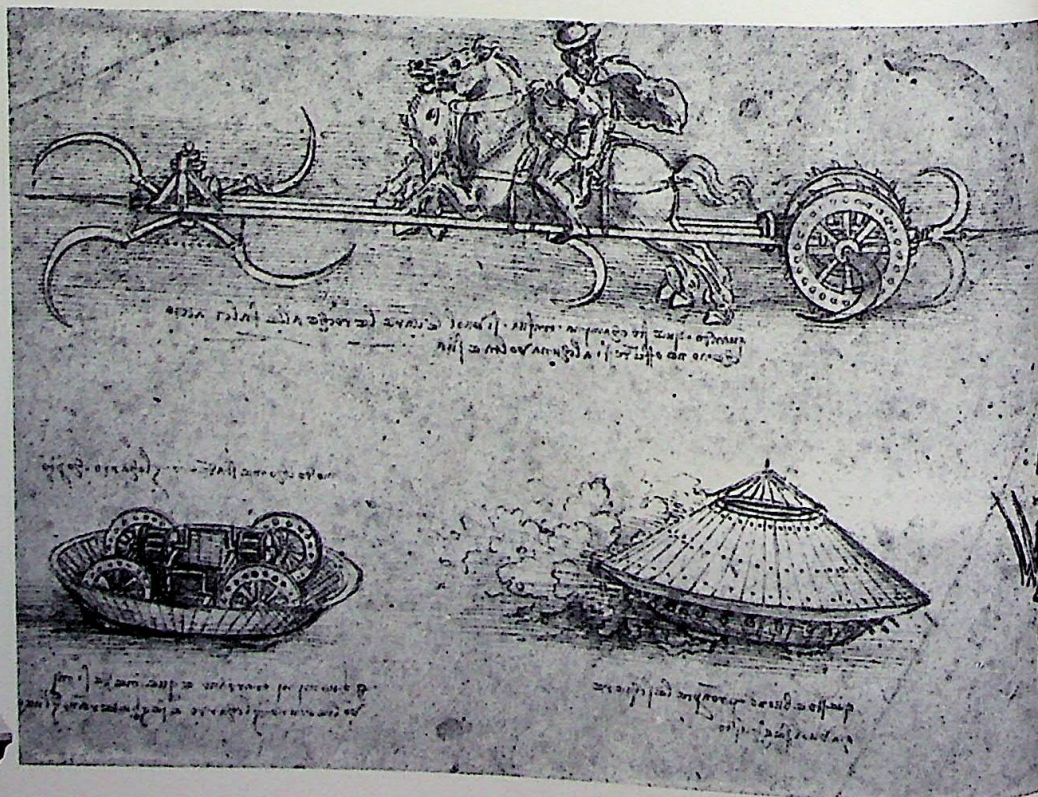
Drawings of an armed chariot and armoured vehicle. War was the most vitally important of all the arts in the Renaissance and called on the services of the greatest artists. In an undated letter to Lodovico Sforza, duke of Milan, Leonardo da Vinci offered to make him 'covered cars, safe and unassailable, which will enter among the enemy with their artillery, and there is no company of men at arms so great that they will not break it'. Drawings c. 1485-88. (Trustees of the British Museum, London.)

Erasmus of Rotterdam

The greatest representative of the Renaissance outside Italy was Desiderius Erasmus. The illegitimate son of a priest, he was born at Rotterdam about 1469. Though he was not much affected by the artistic achievement of the Renaissance, he was in several respects the key figure of his age. He formed a link between the mystical movement known as the *Devotio moderna*, which flourished in the Low Countries during his childhood, and the classical revival in Italy.

Erasmus began his career as a monk but, finding the life distasteful, he escaped to Paris under the pretext of improving his theology. In fact, he was keen to study the classics but only as a means to an end. In his *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* (1501) he showed that the classics, poetry and philosophy were only the prelude to the highest study of all, Scripture. The aim of Erasmus was to fuse the two worlds of antiquity and Christianity and his career illustrates the fact that, in northern Europe, the Renaissance was largely dedicated to a Christian purpose.

By his very active correspondence

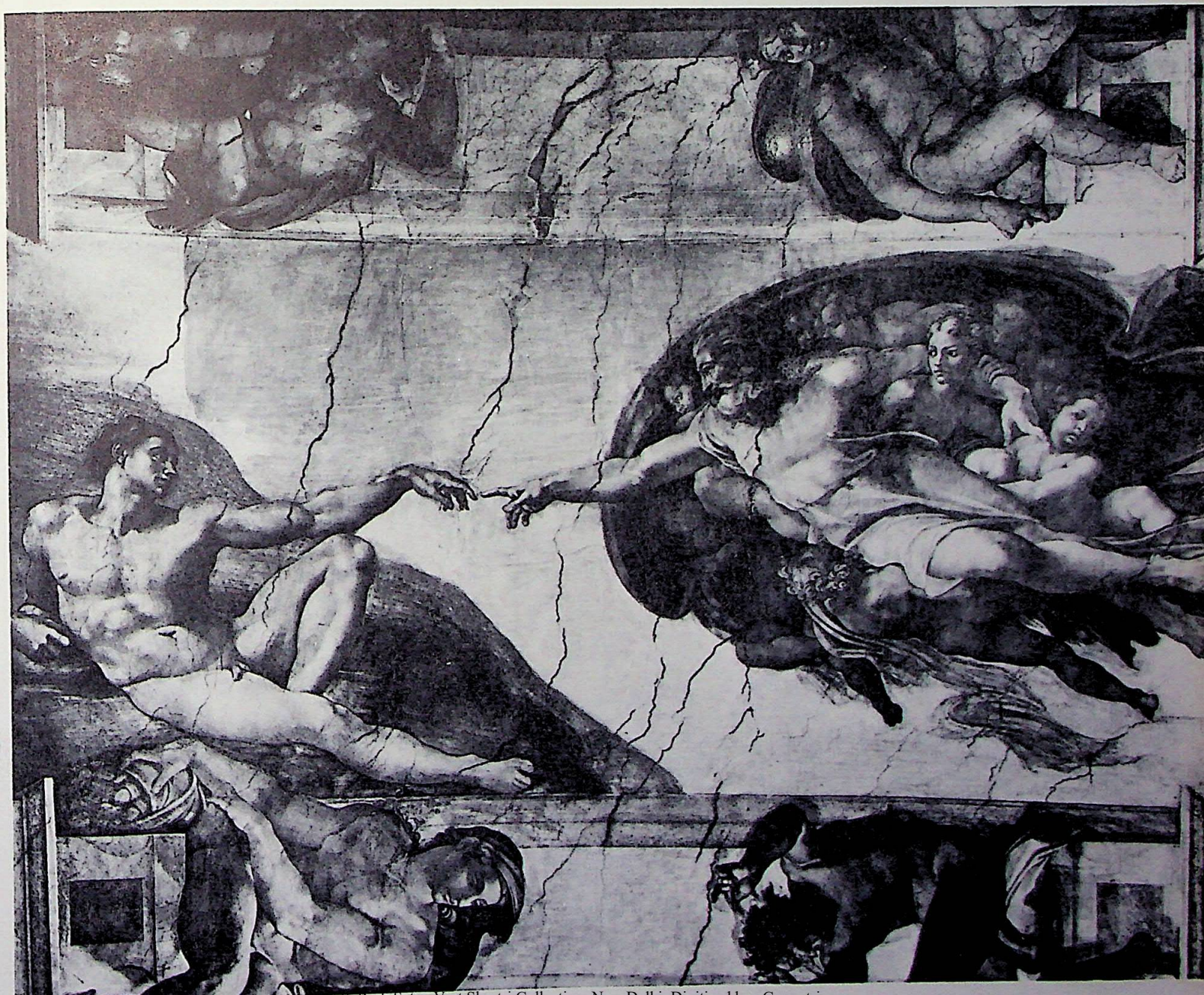


Erasmus established close ties with many of his fellow humanists in other countries. He also travelled a great deal, visiting England, France and Italy before eventually settling down in the printing centre of Basle, where his great edition of the New Testament appeared in 1516. Its preface is full of the spirit of the New Learning: while accepting the doctrine of the Fall, it expresses unbounded confidence in the goodness of man and in his ability to better himself.

Though Erasmus' health was poor and he was deeply disturbed by the troubles of the Reformation, his literary output was main-

tained until his death in 1536. His fame rested as much on his humorous writings, the *Praise of Folly* (1508) and the *Colloquies* (1526), as on his more serious works. He mercilessly lampooned worthless monks, vain schoolmen and warring popes, yet his approach to contemporary problems was also constructive. In the *Education of a Christian Prince* (1516) he laid down the principles upon which the ideal state might be built. In his advocacy of international peace and mutual toleration Erasmus embodied ideals which are often wrongly ascribed to a more modern age than his.

The Creation of Adam: Julius II gave Michelangelo a free hand when he commissioned him to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in 1508. The Creation of Adam, one of the great masterpieces of the Renaissance, is one of several compartments illustrating Genesis. God sweeps down accompanied by angels and touches the hand of the newly created Adam, whose figure combines latent power with complete helplessness. (Sistine Chapel, Rome.)





The Italian Wars

The French invasion of Naples in 1494 sparks off the Italian Wars; by the end of sixty years of war almost the whole of Europe has been involved.

The achievements of the Italian Renaissance did not take place in a vacuum. They need to be set against their political background. For forty years after the Peace of Lodi (1454) Italy was relatively peaceful. A finely balanced equilibrium was established between the five principal states, Naples, the Papacy, Venice, Florence and Rome. In 1494, however, this was upset by the intervention of France in the affairs of the peninsula. The invasion of Naples by the young French king, Charles VIII, marked the beginning of the Italian Wars which lasted on and off for more than half a century, involving more or less directly all the major powers of western Europe.

The wars inevitably affected the lives of the great men of the Renaissance. When Leonardo da Vinci offered his services to the

duke of Milan he stressed the qualities which he felt would be most readily appreciated. He wrote,

'I have kinds of mortars most convenient and easy to carry, and with these I can fling small stones resembling a great storm; and with the smoke of these cause great terror to the enemy, to his great detriment and confusion. . . . I will make covered chariots safe and unassailable, which, entering among the enemy with their artillery, there is no body of men so great but they would break them.'

The Italian Wars were once regarded as the first manifestation of the aggressiveness inherent in the modern nation-state, but all the evidence points to a traditional motivation. War was the chief business of the

medieval aristocracy, while a just war was condoned by the Church. The king of France was not seeking to round off his kingdom with natural frontiers, nor was he looking for economic advantages. His policy was dynastic rather than nationalistic and designed to satisfy the thirst for war of his aristocratic entourage.

The Italian states

Italy in the late fifteenth century was little more than a geographical expression. It was split up into a large number of states of unequal size and different constitutions, the most important being Milan, Venice, Florence, Rome and Naples.

Out of a collection of cities, each with a strongly separatist tradition, the Visconti

dukes of Milan had created a single, well-governed state. After the last Visconti had died in 1447 and an experimental republic had failed, Francesco Sforza, the chief *condottiere* of his day, was proclaimed duke by the citizens.

The other Italian powers saw the need to continue the Visconti system. A strong Milan was necessary as a bulwark against foreign invasion and as a check against Venetian expansion. Milan prospered under the Sforzas: agriculture benefited from irrigation and the silk industry was fostered by the planting of mulberries.

Many more churches and public buildings were erected, notably the Castello Sforzesco. Despite some internal opposition from the so-called Guelf faction, the duchy remained fairly united until 1480 when Lodovico Sforza became regent for his nephew, Gian Galeazzo.

Venice was the most stable of the Italian states. Despite all his colourful trappings of office the doge was just a figurehead, real power being vested in a limited number of aristocratic families. The entire life of the state was controlled by an admirably balanced system of elected councils, such as the Council of Ten whose competence extended even to public entertainments.

Though seemingly oppressive, the Venetian government managed to inspire devotion and love among its citizens. It did this by treating them with consideration and by constantly reminding them of their glorious heritage in magnificent pageants and festivals. The need for food and the fear of neighbours caused Venice to acquire sizeable territories on the Italian mainland in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. This aroused the jealousy and suspicion of other Italian powers. Venice's chief worry, however, was Turkish expansion which threatened the basis of its strength, its naval supremacy.

Florence was theoretically ruled by a popular government but this proved ineffective because of the rivalry between classes and families. As a result power fell into the hands of the Medici, who were able to alter the constitution so as to pack the chief magistracies with their friends. Their supremacy, however, was popular with a majority of merchants, while the lower classes were kept satisfied with abundant food and money freely spent on charitable purposes. Scholars and artists were generously patronised. Although militarily weak Florence acquired a considerable influence among the Italian states because of the Medici's extensive banking connections and their genius for diplomacy. Nevertheless, their rule remained precarious.

The chief aim of the papacy at the end of the fifteenth century was to rule directly all the Italian territories subject to its suzerainty. This policy encountered strong resistance from various quarters, notably from the great Roman families with their

representatives in the College of Cardinals. Cities like Perugia and Bologna and the despots who ruled as vicars of the Church in Romagna were all but independent. For the extension of their authority the popes depended mainly on their relatives: the clerics were promoted to cardinals while the laymen received lands and offices. Sixtus IV, in particular, turned nepotism into a fine art.

Naples, the only feudal kingdom in Italy, was a land of large estates held by turbulent barons, some of them of French and Spanish descent. It was divided into two parts, Naples and the mainland being ruled by an illegitimate branch of the House of Aragon, while Sicily belonged to Ferdinand of Aragon. A constant source of friction was the papal suzerainty over the kingdom. King Ferrante refused to add tribute to the white horse which he presented to the pope each year as a token of his vassalage. While Ferrante was the ally of the Roman nobles, the pope supported the Neapolitan barons.

Among lesser states the most important were the duchy of Ferrara, ruled by the house of Este since the twelfth century, and Mantua, which owed its survival to its marshy situation and the warlike qualities of its Gonzaga dukes. Equally important were Urbino, where the great palace built by Federico da Montefeltro sheltered exiles during the wars, and Bologna, dominated by Giovanni Bentivoglio, a Milanese *condottiere*. All these smaller states and others helped to enrich the civilisation of Italy, while obstructing its unity.

The revival of the French monarchy

The end of the fifteenth century was marked by a revival of monarchy in certain countries of western Europe. These have been called 'new monarchies' but the term is misleading as the kings used traditional methods to consolidate and extend their power.

France was not a unified kingdom in 1450. The royal domain covered only about half of it, the rest being controlled by powerful princes and magnates. The crown nevertheless was able to exploit certain advantages, for example the Salic Law debarring females from the royal succession, and the right of arbitrary taxation. Nothing comparable with the English Parliament existed in France. The nearest equivalent, the Estates-General, which seldom met, lacked legislative authority.

The achievement of King Louis XI (1461-83)

One of the main architects of royal centralisation was Louis XI (1461-83), though his successes were often due to good fortune rather than to policy. Physically repulsive, he disliked pomp and ceremony and wore shabby clothes at least in the early part of his reign. Self-interest was the only motive he understood and he stopped at nothing to



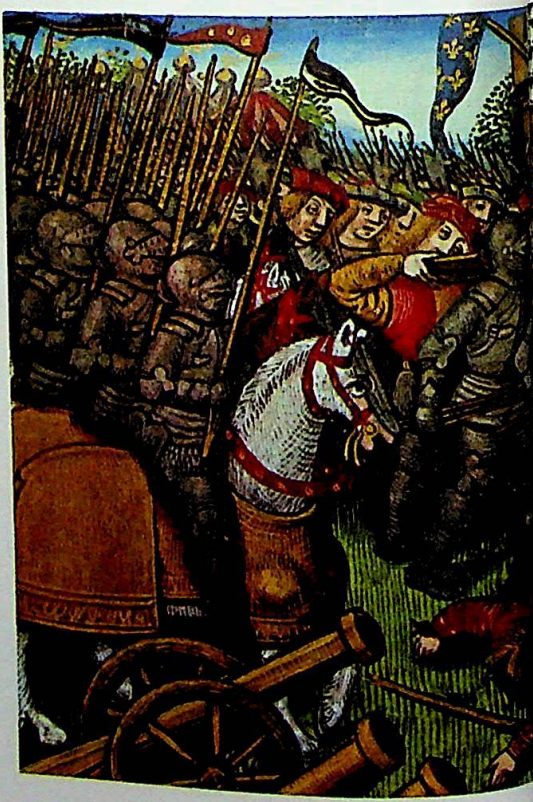
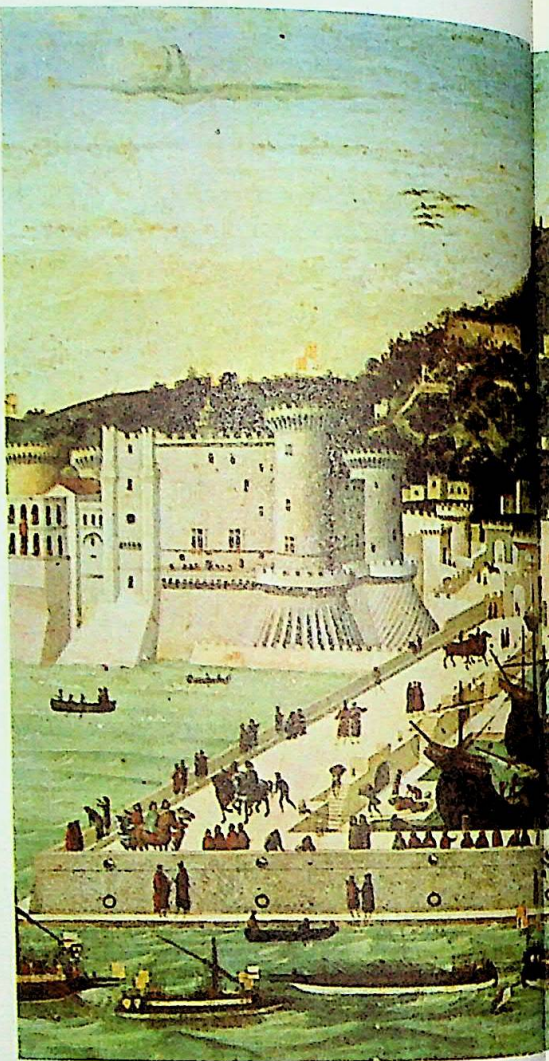
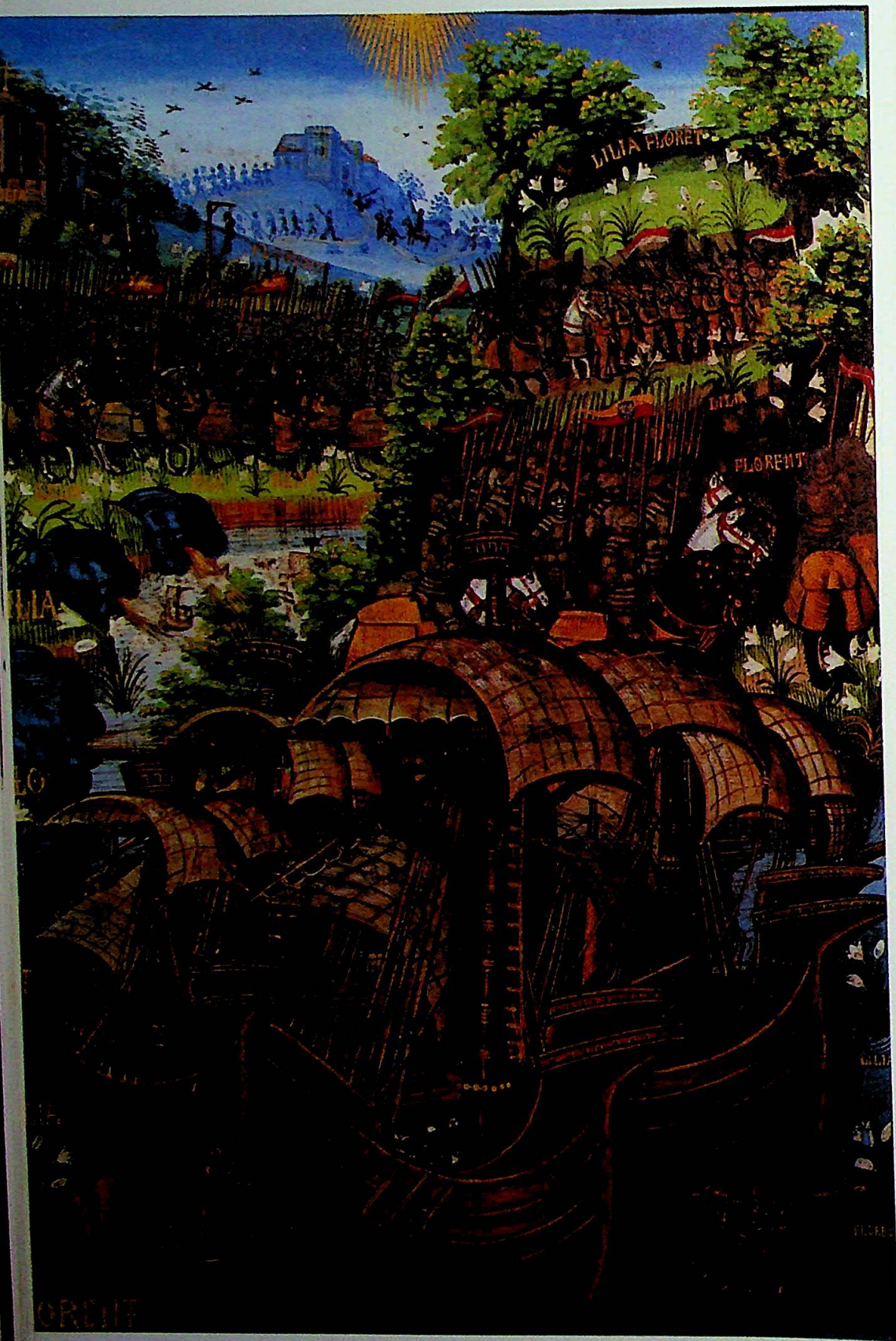
Charles VIII's invasion of Italy in 1494 was more like a triumphal progress than a military campaign.

Left: the French men-at-arms near Milan. Above: the capture of Genoa. Miniatures. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

achieve his ends. Because of his love of intrigue he was called 'the universal spider', yet he was assiduously devout.

At first Louis was opposed by successive coalitions of great lords, but they lacked cohesion and effective leadership, so that he was able to overcome them. His chief enemy was Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy, whose territories extended from the borders of Switzerland to the North Sea. But Charles was defeated and killed by the Swiss at Nancy (1477), leaving only a daughter, Mary, to succeed him. By forcibly seizing part of her inheritance, including Burgundy, Franche-Comté, Picardy and Artois, Louis added substantially to his kingdom. But his action provoked the marriage of Mary with the archduke Maximilian of Austria, which was to cause great trouble for France in the future.

Louis' relations with the house of Anjou were more fortunate. On the death of the old duke, René, in 1480 and of his nephew, the count of Maine, the French crown acquired Maine, Anjou and Provence by reversion. Marseilles became a French port and the inheritance also comprised the Angevin claim to the kingdom of Naples. In addition to these territories Louis XI acquired Roussillon from the king of Aragon. Thus, by 1483 the territorial power of the French monarchy had been doubled.





Louis XI was not a reforming monarch. His government differed from its predecessors simply by reason of its tyrannical character. No one was spared, no privilege respected. Two great nobles, the constable of Saint-Pol and the duke of Nemours, were beheaded. The king's old minister, Cardinal Balue, was imprisoned for eleven years. Royal nominees were foisted upon ecclesiastical chapters and municipal corporations. Arras was savagely punished for its slow submission after the death of Charles the Bold. Many secret agents were employed by the king and the normal processes of the law were distorted to suit his interests.

The heavy cost of Louis' policy caused a steep rise in taxation, the burden of which was borne mainly by the peasantry on account of the nobility's privilege of fiscal exemption. Though Louis did nothing to alleviate the peasant's lot, he did take some interest in trade and industry. He introduced silk manufacture and printing into France and established fairs and markets.

When Louis XI died in 1483, leaving a thirteen-year-old son, Charles, as his heir, it seemed as though France would again lapse into civil turmoil. However, the early collapse of an aristocratic rising known as the

Guerre Folle (1485) served to underline the effectiveness of the king's achievements.

The conquest of Naples

The year 1494 is often taken as the dividing line between medieval and modern history but it is merely a date of convenience. The chief event of that year, Charles VIII's invasion of Italy, was not a startling innovation. Italy had been invaded by northern armies for centuries. In fact, Charles founded his ambitions on earlier successes of the French royal house in the peninsula. The House of Anjou had reigned in Naples for a time and the House of Orléans had intermarried with the Visconti of Milan. But the claims advanced by Charles and his successors were pretexts rather than causes of war.

Far left: the Neapolitan fleet arrived too late to prevent the duke of Orléans from occupying Genoa, 1494.

Below: the French capture Pisa, 1494. Miniatures (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.) Above: view of Naples by an unknown artist, 1464. (Museo di San Martino, Naples.)



France was now a strong and reasonably unified nation; so was Spain. Italy, on the other hand, was a tempting prey by reason of its disunity. Thus, it became the duelling ground of the two rising nation-states.

Few French monarchs have been as insignificant in appearance as Charles VIII. He was stunted and misshapen and contemporaries held the view that his intellect was not superior to his body. Yet, he coupled a vivid imagination with a stubborn wilfulness. Dreams of being the last crusader, of recapturing Constantinople and Jerusalem from the Infidel and of reviving the Byzantine Empire filled his mind. He was encouraged by ministers like Briçonnet who hoped to pick up some ripe plums in Italy. More sober Frenchmen, like the historian, Philippe de Commines, disapproved of the king's purpose.

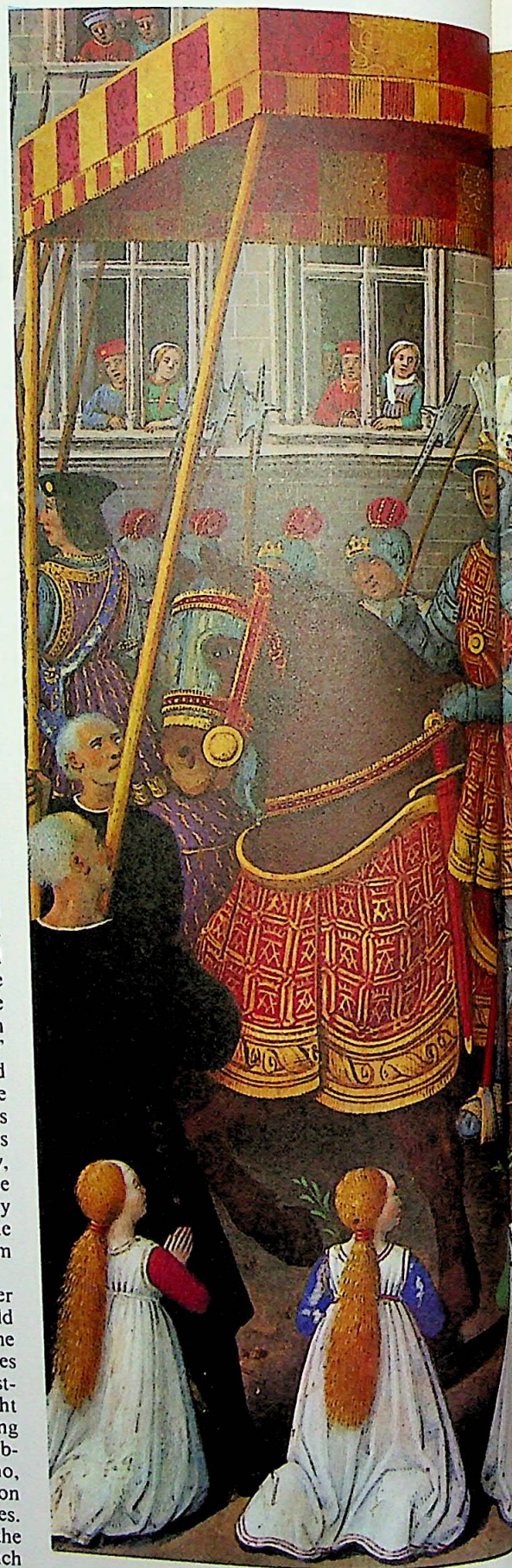
Italy was not prepared to defend herself. Piero de' Medici, who had recently replaced Lorenzo the Magnificent as ruler of Florence, and Pope Alexander VI tended to side with Naples but were not willing to exert themselves in its defence. Lodovico Sforza, who had recently quarrelled with the king of Naples, encouraged Charles to invade. Naples itself was torn by faction and its king lacked ability.

None of the European powers was anxious to intervene at this stage, but Charles had to sacrifice some of his father's territorial gains to ensure that his neighbours would stay neutral. Thus Ferdinand of Aragon was given Roussillon while the emperor Maximilian got back Artois and Franche-Comté. As for Henry VII of England, he was content to accept a large annuity under the Treaty of Étaples (1492).

The army which Charles VIII led across the Alps during the summer of 1494 was about thirty thousand strong. His artillery was more efficient than anything the Italians possessed, but as yet it was not the decisive weapon. The French king still relied mainly on his *gendarmes*, men-at-arms heavily clad in armour and armed with lances.

The invasion was more like a triumphal progress than a military campaign. The Neapolitan fleet, which should have blockaded Genoa, failed to arrive in time so that the duke of Orléans was able to occupy the port. As Charles VIII, after passing through the Milanese, penetrated Tuscany, Piero de' Medici threw himself on his protection and a number of fortresses including Pisa were handed over to him. In November Charles was honorably received by the Florentines as the God-sent regenerator of their country, whose coming had been foretold by the Dominican preacher, Savonarola. The city formally acknowledged the king as the protector of its liberties and promised him financial aid.

Meanwhile the Neapolitan army under Alfonso's heir, Ferrantino, which should have prevented the French from crossing the Apennines, retreated southward. Charles reached Rome without encountering resistance and obtained from Alexander VI right of passage through the Papal States. Finding himself deserted by his allies, Alfonso abdicated in favour of his son, Ferrantino, but the French advance continued and on 22 February 1495 Charles entered Naples. As Ferrantino fled to Ischia, almost the whole of his kingdom passed into French hands.

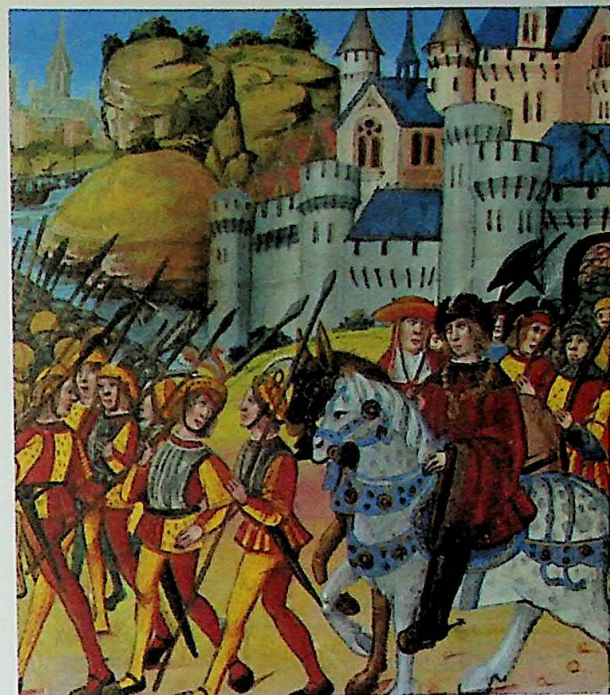




Far left: Georges d'Amboise, cardinal-archbishop of Rouen. He had ambitions to become pope and encouraged Louis XII to conquer Naples in 1500. Miniature. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

In 1507 Louis XII crushed a revolt in Genoa. The rebels were not severely punished; they were merely fined. The king celebrated his success by a triumphal entry (left).

Right: his departure from France. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)



Fornovo and the French loss of Naples

However, French victories in Italy were never secure. Ariosto wrote:

'All who hold the sceptre of France shall see their armies destroyed either by the sword or by famine or by pestilence. They will bring back from Italy short-lived rejoicing and enduring grief, small profit and infinite loss, for the lilies may not strike root in that soil'.

While the French in Naples made themselves thoroughly unpopular by their greed, licentiousness, corruption and brutality, a league of mutual defence was formed by Venice, Milan, the pope, the emperor and Spain.

Fearing that he might be cut off from his base, Charles VIII left a garrison in Naples and marched north. The league's army under Francesco Gonzaga waited for him near Fornovo on the northern side of the Apennines. The king's position was so precarious that he tried to negotiate a passage, but battle was engaged while the talks were still on.

Although it lasted only a quarter of an hour the fighting was fierce. Both sides claimed a victory, but the advantage lay with Charles who was able to reach Lombardy, albeit without his baggage. While the king returned home, the garrison in Naples, stricken with the new epidemic of syphilis, surrendered to the Spaniards. Charles VIII did not give up his Italian ambitions, but he died on 7 April 1498 while his preparations for a new expedition were still incomplete.

The death of Savonarola

The French invasion precipitated a revolution in Florence where the popular desire for more political freedom had been fanned by the preaching of Savonarola. The government of Piero de' Medici was overthrown and a Grand Council of three thousand members on the Venetian model was set up in its place. Savonarola's preaching was also directed against the moral laxity of the age. In this he typified the strongly Puritan streak in fifteenth-century piety. Everywhere in Europe people were expressing disgust for the extravagances of the secular life and for the corporeal existence. Savonarola could move an audience to a near-frenzy of self-denial. As a result of his preaching many so-called 'vanities' were thrown into bonfires.

The friar's hold on Florence, however, depended on the fulfilment of his prophecies. As the city became involved in a long and costly war against Pisa and isolated from the rest of Italy, disillusion set in among its people. Savonarola's influence was further weakened when he was forbidden to preach and excommunicated by the pope. In 1498 he was arrested and tried for his claim to prophecy and his political action. After torture had been used to extract a confession he was burnt at the stake on 23 May. His death did not produce any change of constitution or policy. Florence continued to be virtually a vassal of France till 1512 when the Medici were restored to power.



Louis XII and the conquest of Milan

Charles VIII was succeeded by his cousin, Louis XII, who also had a dynastic interest in Italy. As the grandson of Valentina Visconti he had a claim to the duchy of Milan and was encouraged to make it good by his chief minister, Georges d'Amboise, archbishop of Rouen, who had papal ambitions. The king could count on the support of Pope Alexander VI, who was mainly concerned to establish his family as the supreme power in central Italy. A series of mutually satisfactory transactions ensued.

In exchange for an annulment of his marriage Louis bestowed the duchy of Valentinois on the pope's son, Cesare Borgia, and gave him the hand of the heiress of Navarre. When Cesare came to France to fetch his bride he brought with him a cardinal's hat for Georges d'Amboise. The king of France won Venice over by promising to give it Cremona. He signed agreements with England, Spain and the emperor, and obtained permission to levy troops in the Swiss cantons at the price of an annual subsidy to each of them.

In September 1499 a French army under Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, a Milanese exile, captured Milan effortlessly, while Lodovico Sforza fled to the imperial court in Austria where he was hospitably received. The tide of events soon turned in his favour. The Swiss, being dissatisfied with their treatment by the French, offered him ten thousand men. This enabled him to return to Milan in the spring. As he approached, the citizens, who had soon grown tired of the French occupation, rose and opened their gates to him. On 8 April 1500, however, Sforza was betrayed by his Swiss troops at Novara and fell into the hands of the French as he tried to escape. He was taken to France where he remained a prisoner till the end of his life.

Instead of resting content with this success Louis directed his attention to Naples. In the Treaty of Granada (November 1500) he and Ferdinand of Aragon agreed to conquer and partition the kingdom. Finding himself under fire from two directions, Federigo of Naples threw himself upon Louis' mercy. He was sent to France and given the duchy of Anjou in compensation for his lost kingdom.

Louis now controlled the northern half of Naples while Ferdinand held Apulia and Calabria. But trouble very soon arose over territories not specified in the partition treaty, especially Capitanata where profits were made from the tolls levied on livestock going to and from their winter and summer pastures. Gonsalo da Córdoba won a decisive victory at Cerignola in April 1503 and the French retired to Gaeta. Their capitulation early in the following year placed the whole of Naples under the Aragonese crown.

The ascendancy of Cesare Borgia

The French invasion enabled Alexander VI to assert his authority in the states of the Church, which had become a conglomeration of virtually independent lordships. His efforts were directed not only to strengthening the temporal power of the papacy but still more at founding a permanent state for his family. Between 1499 and 1501 his son, Cesare Borgia, conquered most of Romagna and was created its duke. Machiavelli wrote:

'This lord is very proud and fine, and as a soldier is so enterprising that nothing is so great that it does not seem small to him, and for the sake of glory and of acquiring lands he does not rest, and acknowledges no

fatigue or danger. He arrives at one place before he is known to have left the other; he endears himself to his soldiers; he has got hold of the best men in Italy, and these factors, together with continual good fortune, make him victorious and dangerous.'

As the grandson of Valentina Visconti, King Louis XII of France claimed the duchy of Milan.

Left: his departure from Aosta, 1499.

Miniature (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

Below: the Florentine chancellor, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), who looked to the Roman republic for answers to the political problems of his day. (Società Colombaria.)



In 1500 the French conquered Milan to which Louis XII had a claim (right). Their success was sealed at Novara in April when Duke Lodovico Sforza was captured (far right). The rest of his life was spent as a prisoner in France.
 Centre: Louis XII and his chief minister, the cardinal of Amboise.
 Below: Lodovico's army enters Como.
 Miniatures. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)



But Cesare's good fortune ran out just as he was thinking of deserting the French alliance which was an obstacle to an extension of his power in Tuscany. In August 1503 Alexander VI died and without his support Cesare's states began to fall apart.

The League of Cambrai

The benefits of Borgia policy in central Italy were reaped by Giuliano della Rovere who became Pope Julius II in November 1503. Julius was a man of vast ambitions and boundless energy. His initial aim was to recover all the territories of the Church. After two years of preparation he set out from Rome on a campaign of conquest accompanied by all but the most infirm cardinals. In 1506 he made a triumphal entry into Bologna. Standing among the crowd that watched him go by was Erasmus, to whom the satire, *Julius Exclusus*, has been attributed. This set out to show the incompatibility between the aims and achievements of the greatest Renaissance pope and the Christian ideal. St Peter refuses to recognise in the warlike figure with his magnificent tiara and pallium the representative of the apostolic succession he had established.

Julius II's next move was directed against Venice, which had occupied Rimini and Faenza after the fall of the Borgias. At his instigation France, England, Spain and the empire formed the League of Cambrai in 1508 and in the following year a French army invaded Venetian territory, winning a decisive victory at Agnadello. Once Julius had recovered the cities of Romagna, however, he devoted all his energies to expelling the French from Italy. He tried to foment a

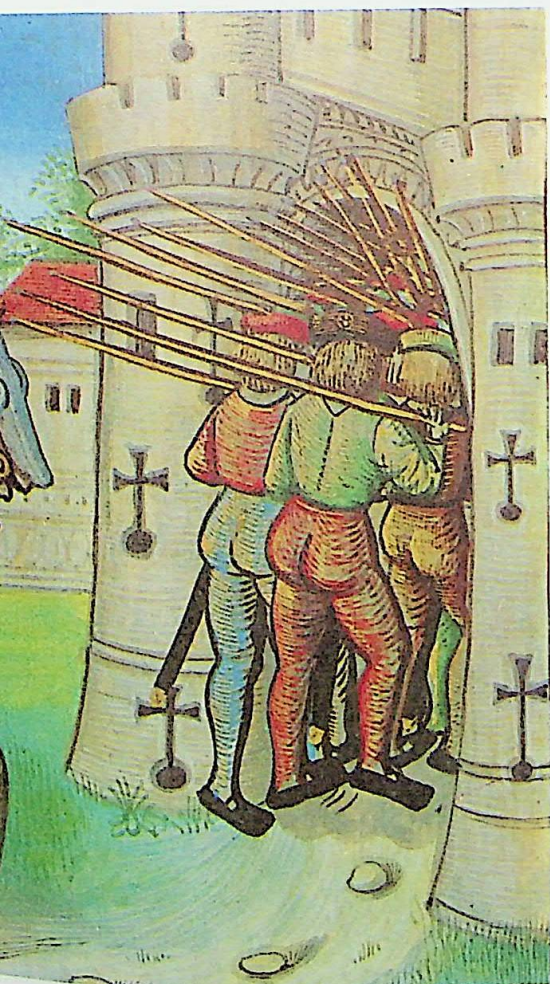
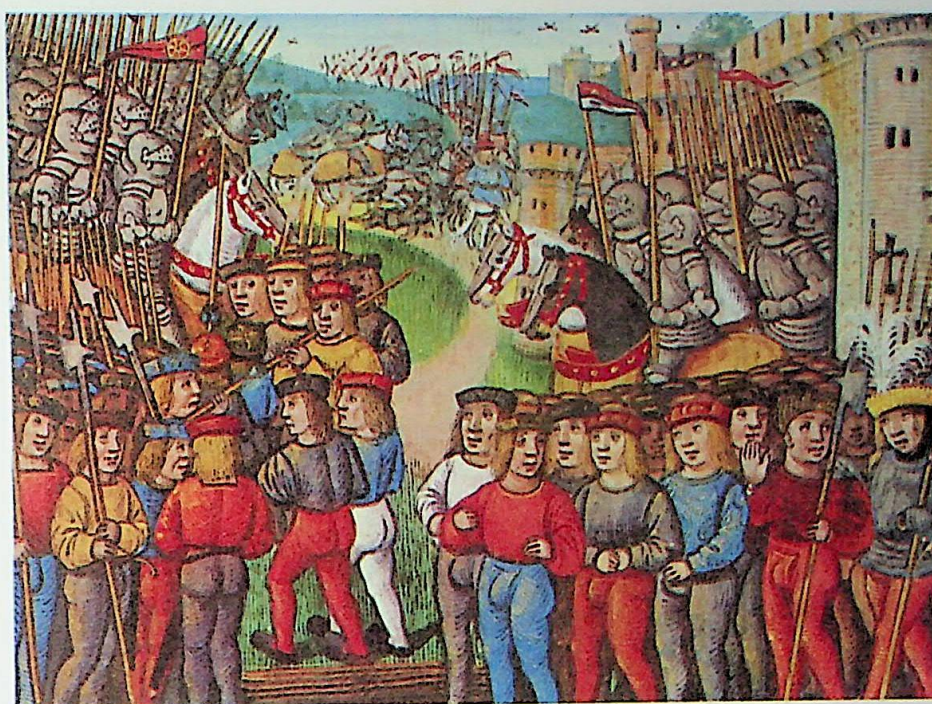
rebellion in Genoa, attacked the duke of Ferrara who was France's ally, and secured the military assistance of the Swiss cantons.

By the end of the fifteenth century the Swiss had become the leading military power in Europe. Their confederation consisted of thirteen rural and urban cantons without any central executive authority. Common policy was determined by a diet of cantonal representatives which met at regular intervals. The Swiss were largely dependent on pay and loot acquired as mercenary troops in the service of foreign powers. 'This fierce and primitive people', wrote Guicciardini, 'have won great renown by their union and feat of arms, for by their natural ferocity and military discipline they have always defended their own country and won great fame fighting in foreign service.'

Because of their geographical situation the Swiss were able to play a decisive role in the Italian Wars. Until 1510 they served France more or less consistently. In March of that year, though, they were persuaded by Matthias Schinner, archbishop of Sion, to place six thousand men at the pope's disposal for five years in return for an annual subsidy to each canton.

Louis XII retaliated by calling a general council to reform the Church. This move was welcomed by his Gallican subjects and was even supported by the emperor Maximilian. But the council which opened at Pisa in November 1510 soon ran into trouble and was moved to Milan to be under the protection of the French army. In 1511 Julius took the wind out of its sails by summoning the fifth Lateral Council, which was enthusiastically acclaimed by most of Christendom. The Council of Pisa-Milan retired to Lyons and dissolved itself.





The conflict between the French king and the pope came to a head in 1512, when a French army under the command of the brilliant young general, Gaston de Foix, swept across the Po valley and defeated a combined Spanish and papal army at Ravenna (11 April). This victory was not followed up, however, for Gaston was killed and no one of comparable ability could be found to replace him. As a powerful Swiss army descended into Lombardy the French hastily retreated.

Henry VIII of England and his father-in-law, Ferdinand of Aragon, chose this moment to plan a joint conquest of Gascony, but the wily Spanish monarch merely used an English expeditionary force as a cover to annex part of the small kingdom of Navarre. Even so, Henry did not give up the idea of armed intervention across the Channel.

Louis XII would have been well advised to seek a respite from war, but the death of Julius II and a change in the attitude of Ferdinand of Aragon encouraged him to try his luck again in Italy. Yet another French army overran Lombardy, only to be decisively routed by the Swiss at Novara. This was followed by another humiliation for French arms in northern France when a cavalry force was intercepted by the English as it was on its way to relieve the beleaguered garrison of Théroouanne. The French fled from the field so fast that the engagement became known as 'the Battle of the Spurs'. On the Anglo-Scottish border, Louis XII's ally, James IV, was defeated and killed at Flodden. The general debacle was completed when the Swiss, having driven the French out of Italy, penetrated Burgundy and laid siege to Dijon.

Changes in warfare

The Battle of Ravenna was one of the earliest in which artillery played a decisive role, but this was not the only change in the art of war during this period.

The victories won by the Swiss infantry against the Burgundians in the 1470s had proved that wars could no longer be won by cavalry alone. The use of infantry, however, presented serious disciplinary problems. Most countries could not afford to keep up permanent armies on a large scale. They were, therefore, obliged to hire mercenaries who fought only for money; if this ran short they became insubordinate or disbanded. Native troops raised in an emergency were easier to manage but they were not as well trained as professionals. Only the Swiss cantons and Spain possessed an infantry which was at once native and professional.

The best mercenaries were undoubtedly the Swiss pikemen who fought in compact squares of about six thousand men, eighty-five shoulder to shoulder on a hundred-yard-long front and about seventy ranks deep. If possible they used three squares in echelon. The success of the Swiss formation depended on a strict discipline: cowards were executed and no prisoners taken. The Swiss wore little armour and were, therefore, able to attack fast. Their method of fighting proved so effective in the early stages of the Italian wars that it was copied by the *Landsknechte* (German infantry armed mainly with pike and often employed as mercenaries). It had certain disadvantages, however; the squares were easy targets for missiles and were not suited to rough terrain or well adapted to siege work.

Despite the growing prestige of infantry,



heavy cavalry continued to be the aristocracy of war. The men-at-arms mounted on strongly armoured horses were equipped with the lance, axe or mace and their tactic was always to charge furiously in bodies of four to five hundred men. In the course of the wars there was a growing tendency to emphasise the distinction between heavy and light cavalry. The latter was, of course, especially useful in foraging and raiding.

Artillery changed considerably during the Italian Wars. Mere size was abandoned in favour of mobility and accuracy. The French continued the Burgundian tradition of light artillery capable of keeping up with an army on the march. The use of iron instead of stone balls also spread. But the wide variety of calibres complicated the task of supplying and carrying ammunition. Portable firearms gradually emerged as the dominant missile weapon during the Italian Wars. Although the range of the arquebus was barely four hundred yards, its heavy bullet caused the crossbow to be relegated to sea warfare and siege work in the 1520s. At

first arquebuses were mainly used to defend fortified positions, but by 1512 they came into the open. They were fired over the heads of pikemen who protected them.

The development of artillery inevitably led to changes in the art of fortification. The success of the French guns in 1494 had shown that tall, thin walls were no longer adequate as a protection. The main innovation was the bastion—a solid construction projecting from the curtain with supporting guns—but for a long time old fortifications were modified rather than new ones built. The first large scale works were undertaken at Verona in 1520.

Renaissance diplomacy

The character and machinery of international diplomacy also changed as a result of the political situation which produced the Italian Wars. The most significant change was the growth of diplomacy of the kind we take for granted today. In the Middle Ages ambassadors were normally sent to attend

With the pope's permission Louis XII remarried his predecessor's widow, Anne, duchess of Brittany. The royal couple are here seen watching a tournament (above). Louis XII's chief enemy was Ferdinand of Aragon, whom he had to fight in Naples (below) and on the Pyrenean border (above right). Miniatures. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)



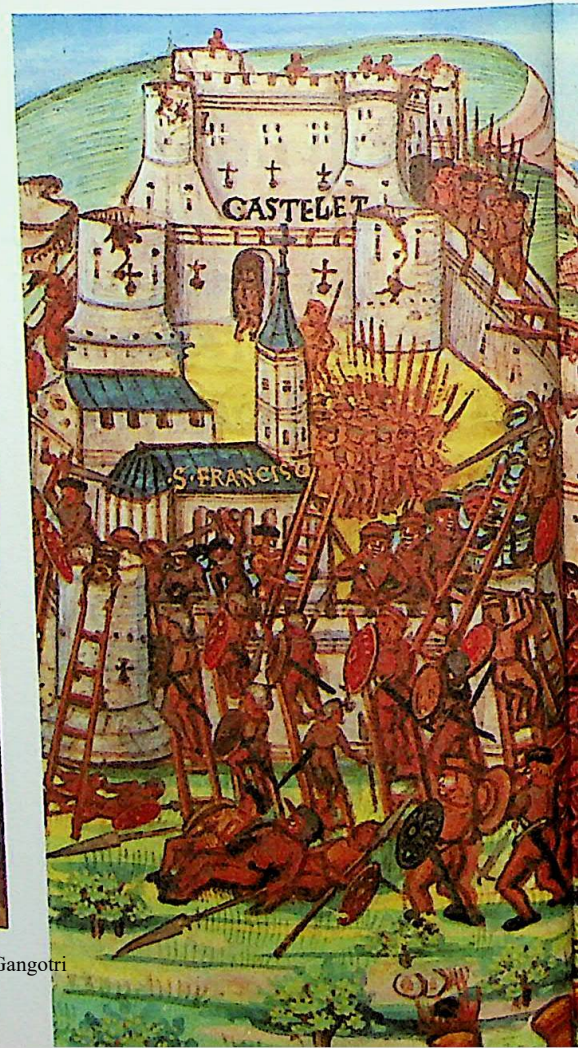
to some particular matter and once they had accomplished their mission they returned home. Diplomatic continuity barely existed. By the end of the fifteenth century, however, international relations had become so complex and so changeable that the need was felt for a more permanent form of diplomatic relationship. The security of a state came to depend on the speed and accuracy of the information that it received about the plans and activities of its neighbours. No one could afford to let diplomacy lapse.

Italy was the cradle of modern diplomacy. The precarious balance established by the Peace of Lodi (1454) between the five major Italian states could be maintained only by watchfulness and co-operation. They consequently exchanged permanent ambassadors and, as other states of Europe began to put pressure on Italy, the practice spread across the Alps. Milan had an ambassador in France as from 1463 and Venice as from 1485. Eventually all the principal European powers maintained permanent representatives at each other's courts. Yet standing

diplomacy had not been universally adopted by the early sixteenth century, nor did it supersede the traditional system of *ad hoc* embassies which continued to be used for the most important negotiations.

The resident envoy was a man of relatively modest status, whose function was mainly to investigate and report. More often than not he lived in humble circumstances and could barely afford to feed and clothe himself adequately. Special ambassadors, on the other hand, were usually people of the highest rank, noblemen or prelates, who travelled with large and extravagant retinues. Heralds were sometimes used as negotiators though their usual task was to bear defiance or declare war. Alongside the official diplomats there existed a vast and shadowy network of secret agents, spies and informers. The Italian rulers were often indebted for their information to merchants and bankers.

One of the most important tasks of the resident envoy was to convey news as fully, speedily and accurately as possible to his





government. Lengthy and frequent dispatches would contain vivid pen-portraits of important people and verbatim reports of conversations with them. Rumours too were included, even if they had to be denied in a subsequent dispatch. Security necessitated extreme vigilance, as the merest whisper might contain the first intimation of impending strife. The resident envoy, as one contemporary said, was 'a man sent to lye abroad for his country's good'. Diplomatic dispatches were normally in the vernacular though cipher was used where secrecy was essential. Formal international documents and official speeches were usually in Latin.

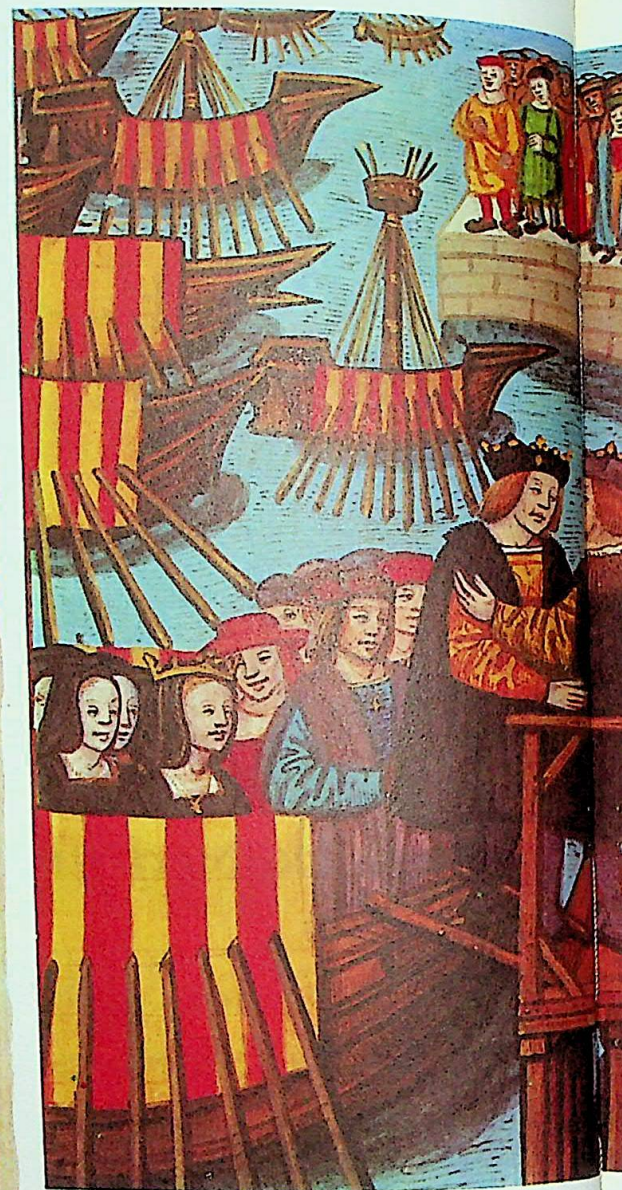
Machiavelli

The standard of political morality in the sixteenth century was probably no worse than in any other age, but standing diplomacy, perhaps because it was not yet firmly established, often appeared cunning, furtive and treacherous. No one was better acquainted with this political atmosphere than Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), whose name has been turned into an adjective to describe it. From 1498 until 1512 Machiavelli served the Florentine republic as chancellor and secretary, and as ambassador to Louis XII, Cesare Borgia, Julius II and others. Being an exceptionally acute observer of the political scene, he soon became aware of the low esteem in which Florence was held abroad.

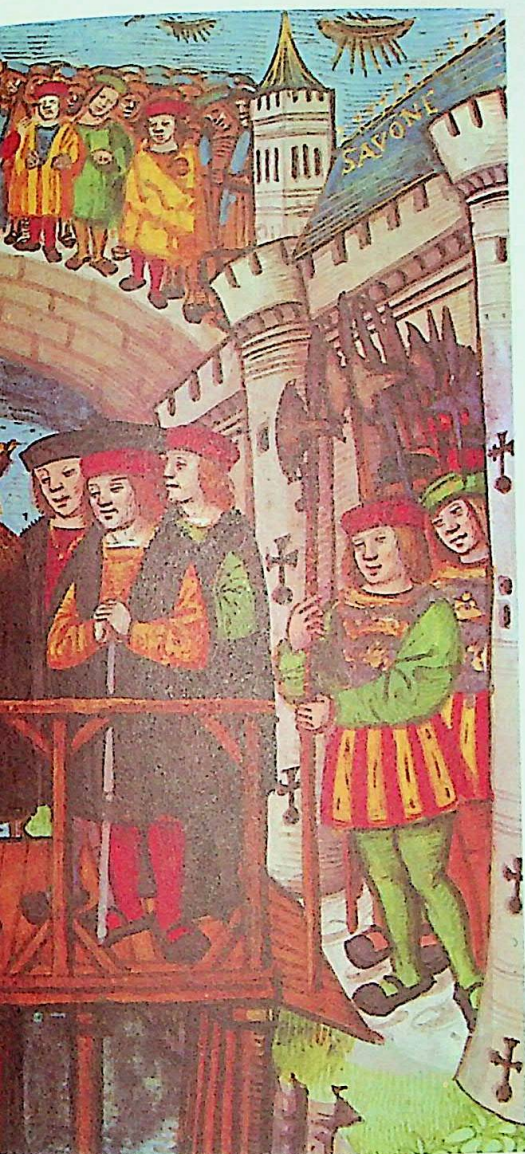
Pope Julius II was so upset by Louis XII's successful crushing of the Genoese revolt in 1507 that he apparently remained shut up in his apartments for three days.

Left (above and below) : various scenes from the siege of Genoa.

Above: the citizens of Genoa making their submission to the king. Miniatures. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)



Political disunity was Italy's besetting weakness in 1494. The peninsula comprised many states varying in size and constitution. The most important were the duchy of Milan, the republics of Florence and Venice, the States of the Church and the kingdom of Naples.



Left: the development of standing diplomacy during the Italian Wars did not preclude summit meetings between monarchs. In June 1507 Ferdinand of Aragon and Louis XII met at Savona.

Bottom left: artillery came into its own during the Italian Wars; it was at first more useful against walls than men.

Below: Julius II was the most bellicose of Renaissance popes. His entry into Bologna in 1506 crowned his policy of reasserting papal authority in central Italy. Miniatures. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)





Within a year of his accession Francis I avenged the disasters suffered by French arms in 1513. The victory which he won at Marignano (13 September 1515) destroyed the legend that the Swiss infantry was invincible. Miniature. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

After the expulsion of the French from Italy in 1512, the Florentine government was overthrown and the Medici restored to power. Machiavelli was dismissed and in February 1513 he retired to his country house ten miles from the city. His letters to Vettori and Soderini reveal his boredom, frustration, bitterness, anxiety and nostalgia for politics. 'Fortune', he wrote, 'has so devised that since I cannot talk of the silk trade or the wool trade or of profit and loss, I have to talk of politics.' His mind ran on recent events and why they had happened. He came to the conclusion that policies should be judged solely by their results, not by the means used to attain them.

The lessons drawn by Machiavelli from his bitter experience of politics are embodied in *The Prince* (1513) and the *Discourses on Livy* (1515-17). Though he regarded man as basically anti-social and anarchical, he thought he could be educated to desire strong government. Strength alone mattered since 'fortune will not help those who will not help themselves'. To avoid mistakes in the present it was necessary to study the past and imitate its successful men. For examples of political wisdom Machiavelli turned to the Roman republic with its well-balanced society, efficient consulate and citizen militia, and socially binding religion. At heart he was a republican, but he was ready to admit that despotism might be the answer to the needs of sixteenth-century Italy.

Machiavelli has been frequently misrepresented and misjudged. Cardinal Pole was convinced that Satan had held his pen; Frederick the Great called him 'the doctor of villainy'. In fact, Machiavelli was not a bad man but a realist passionately searching for the truth. Whereas writers in the past had mixed up politics with ethics and religion, he had the courage to affirm that politics are politics.



Economic and social change

The population of Europe grows causing price increases and scarcity of food; the Atlantic and the North Sea become the main focus of trade, with Antwerp all-powerful.

Europeans had travelled beyond the limits of their continent before the Renaissance, but in the fifteenth century a number of countries which had so far played no part in exploration began to send expeditions into uncharted seas. As a result of their efforts new lands were discovered, old superstitions shattered, hitherto respectable theories disproved and new sources of wealth tapped.

The economic effects of European expansion

The great overseas discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in addition to being remarkable achievements in themselves, had far-reaching effects on the economic and social life of Europe. The opening up of the Cape route to the Spice

Above: St Jerome in his study. This painting by Antonello da Messina shows the artist's indebtedness to Flemish art. He was isolated from the main stream of experiment flowing from Florence in the fifteenth century. (National Gallery, London.)



Islands by the Portuguese threatened the monopoly hitherto enjoyed by Italian, particularly Venetian, merchants, while the discovery by the Spaniards of gold and silver in Central and South America led to an increase of the amount of money circulating in Europe.

The Portuguese spice trade

Among the goods which reached Europe from the Far East in the Middle Ages spices were particularly important. They included not only condiments for preserving and seasoning food but also drugs, perfumes and cosmetics. No less than two hundred and eighty-eight varieties of spices are listed in a merchant's manual of the fourteenth century. The most valuable were pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg, mace and cloves, which came mainly from the East Indies. By the fifteenth century most of this trade came to Europe by sea.

The goods were carried by Arab merchants from places like Malacca or Calicut across the Indian Ocean to ports along the Persian Gulf or Red Sea, whence they were carried by boat or overland to markets in Egypt or the Levant. Here they were bought by Venetian merchants who carried them the rest of the way to Europe. In short, the goods were bought and sold several times over, each time becoming more expensive. Moreover, the various governments straddling the route imposed heavy tolls and duties, so that the ultimate cost of the goods far exceeded their original price.

The Portuguese doubtless hoped that by discovering an alternative route to the Far East they would be able to obtain cheaper spices for at least themselves, but they were less successful than was once assumed. Although the Cape route to the East was free from tolls and duties and could be controlled from one extremity to the other by a single trading interest, it was almost twice as long as the old route. The risk of shipwreck and of cargoes deteriorating was consequently greater. The Portuguese were also less experienced than their rivals in handling and shipping goods, whilst Lisbon was less conveniently situated than Venice for the distribution of spices to the rest of Europe. Furthermore, the Portuguese were obliged to take military action in the Indian Ocean to protect their trade and, in an attempt to destroy that of their competitors, they had to spend a large amount of money on forts, ships, armaments and men. Thus, it appears unlikely that they made large profits out of the spice business.

Had the Portuguese succeeded in destroying the trade of the Venetians and Arabs they would have been completely successful, but this did not happen. After a temporary setback early in the sixteenth century the old trade through the Levant revived. By 1560 it was so brisk that a Portuguese diplomat in Rome even suggested that his master should seriously think of importing spices



that way himself if only he could come to terms with the Turks!

The recovery of the old trade was largely due to the corruption and inefficiency of Portuguese officials in the East, who were ready to ignore it in return for a share of the profits. Thus, the Portuguese spice trade was only a qualified success. The once popular notion that it caused the decline of Venice is no longer tenable. Piracy in the Mediterranean undermined the Venetian commercial structure to a much greater extent.

The Spanish bullion trade

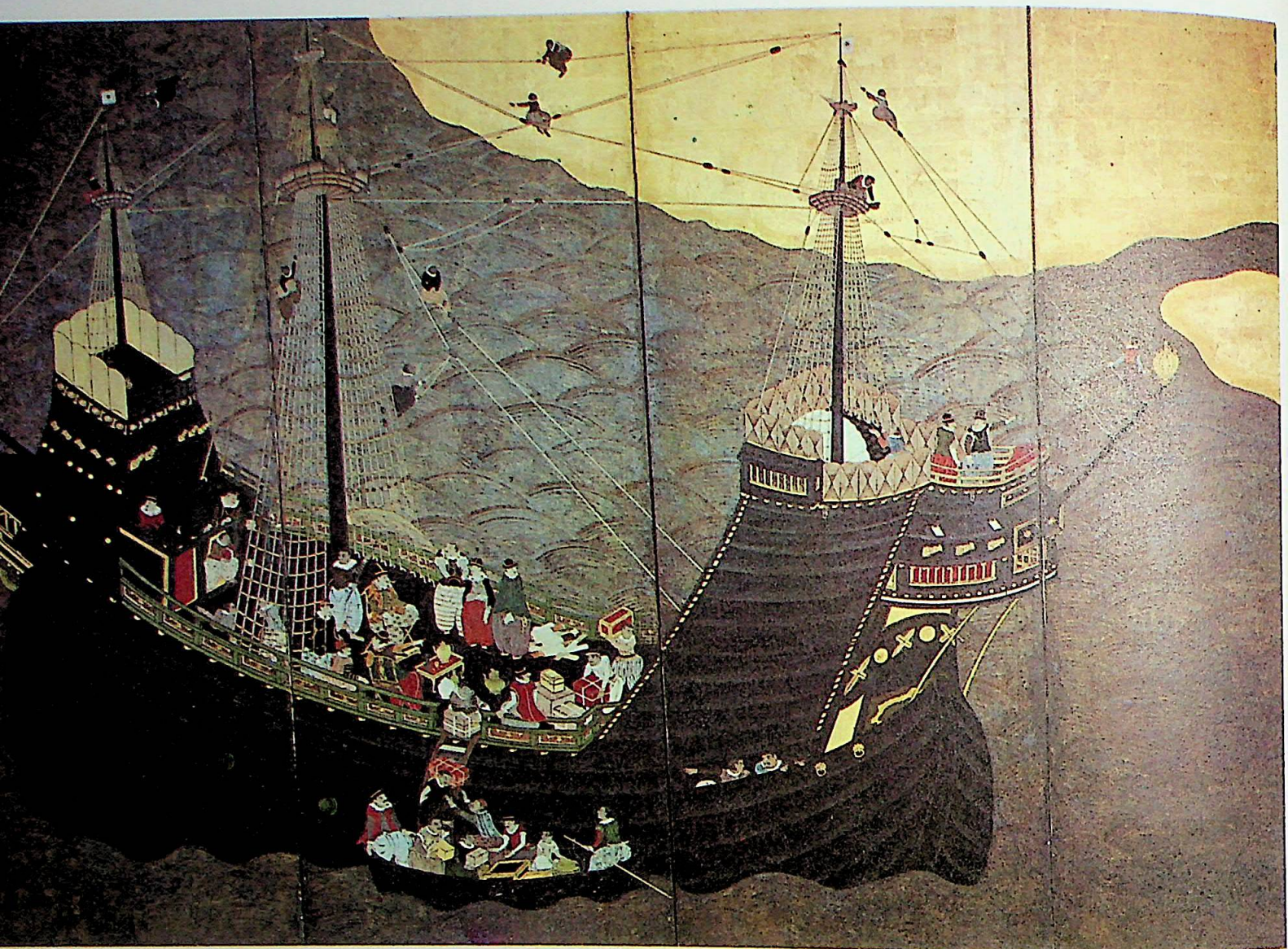
While the Portuguese were founding an empire in the Far East, the Spaniards created an empire of their own in Central and South America. Though the settlers were interested mainly in cattle, horses and sheep, they established sugar and tobacco plantations in coastal areas and discovered gold and silver.

During the first forty years of the sixteenth century the chief metal export from America was gold, which was either taken from the natives as barter or booty or mined in a primitive way by the conquistadores. However, in the fifteen-forties, large deposits of silver were found at Potosi and Guanajuato. Mining was left to private enterprise but the Spanish government reserved to itself a proportion of the metal, known as the *quint*,

Antwerp was one of Europe's leading money markets in the sixteenth century.

Opposite: The Moneychanger and his Wife by Quentin Massis (1465-1530), who worked in the city. (Louvre, Paris.)

Above: a similar couple by Marinus van Reymerswael (1497?-1570). (Museo del Prado, Madrid.)



The expansion of Europe overseas in the fifteenth century gave merchants new openings for their trade.

Above: a Portuguese ship unloading its cargo in Japan.

Above right: the cargo is brought ashore. Japanese painted screens. Late sixteenth-early seventeenth century. (Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon.)

Right: a banker. Miniature from the Livre Fleur de Vertu. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)





which was approximately a fifth. Government agents were posted in America to prevent concealment and smuggling. All the bullion had to pass through the House of Trade in Seville, which was under the jurisdiction of the Council of the Indies. The government also controlled the supply of mercury which was used for extracting the silver from the ore.

Originally the bullion was carried to Spain by individual merchant ships which were armed and expected to defend themselves if attacked. Piracy, though, developed to such an extent that, in 1564, the Spanish government set up a system of convoys which sailed twice a year, in April and August. This proved quite efficient. The convoys reached their destination safely, except in 1628 when one was captured by the Dutch and in 1656 when another was intercepted by the English. On arrival the ships were carefully inspected by representatives of the House of Trade before anyone was allowed ashore. The treasure was then transported to Seville where it was weighed and stored pending its disposal. Officially some eighteen

thousand tons of silver and two hundred tons of gold reached Spain between 1521 and 1660.

The price revolution

A most important phenomenon of the sixteenth century was a rise in prices which affected the whole of Europe. This had serious social repercussions: people who depended on fixed incomes suffered, while others who lived by trade or speculation could grow rich quickly. Political life reflected these social changes.

The extent of the so-called price revolution is not easily assessed, for the documentary evidence available to the historian is difficult to interpret and often incomplete. Evidence exists only for certain areas, and particular commodities. Little is known about the price of ordinary commodities like butter or cheese in England, but a fair amount about that of woollen cloth and other textiles. Variations in the size and quality of cloth, however, are not always indicated, so that it is often impossible to

compare the prices of comparable goods. The evidence for cereals is good but the price varied from year to year according to the harvests and even from district to district. Thus, it is impossible to compile a really accurate price index for the sixteenth century.

Despite these technical difficulties it would appear that the prices of basic consumable goods in England tripled by 1580 and quadrupled by 1600, a process which was reflected in other countries as well. In Flanders the price of wheat was 93 per cent higher in 1521-22 than in the previous year, and in Hainaut 115 per cent. In Antwerp there was a sharp rise in the price of fuel and the value of rents. In Spain there was a 2.8 per cent average annual increase in prices from 1501 to 1562 and a 1.3 per cent increase from 1562 to 1600. By comparison with more modern times the inflation of the sixteenth century was not particularly severe. It has been calculated that prices went up 400 per cent in ninety years, whereas in the twentieth century they may have risen by as much in only forty years. But the price

revolution came at the end of a long period of stable prices and sixteenth century society was less able to adapt itself to changing conditions than its modern counterpart.

Causes of the price revolution

Inflation occurs when 'too much money chases too few goods'. In the sixteenth century the scarcity of food and other commodities was blamed on such human weaknesses as idleness or greed. Sir Thomas More in *Utopia* blamed 'the unreasonable covetousness of a few' for 'the great dearth of victualles.' He believed that food was running short because greedy landlords were turning their land over to sheep on account of the profits to be made out of the sale of wool. In 1533 Thomas Starkey asserted that 'a great part of these people which we have here in our country is either idle or ill-occupied. . . .'

In 1556, however, another explanation of the price revolution was advanced by Martín de Azpilcueta of the University of Salamanca. He showed that 'money is worth more when and where it is scarce than where it is abundant.' We see by experience', he wrote, 'that in France, where money is scarcer than in Spain, bread, cloth and labour are worth much less. And even in Spain, in times when money was scarcer, saleable goods and labour were given for very much less than after the discovery of the Indies, which flooded the country with gold and silver.'

This theory was further expounded in 1568 by the French lawyer, Jean Bodin, in a published reply to M. de Malestroit, who had blamed successive debasements of the coinage for the inflation.

Recently, however, the theory that the importation of precious metals from America was the principal cause of the price revolution has been largely discredited. American treasures did not begin to reach Europe in sizeable quantities until the middle of the sixteenth century, yet prices had begun to rise in the preceding fifty years. Moreover, much of the silver that reached Spain was immediately re-exported to pay for its imports, to maintain its armies abroad and to repay loans made by foreign bankers. As a result Spain suffered from a dearth rather than a surplus of gold and silver. This meant that in the seventeenth century it was obliged to adopt a billon currency, that is, base metal mixed with gold and silver. It would seem, therefore, that the price rise in Spain was a credit, not a monetary, inflation.

Population growth

In recent years the view has been adopted that a major cause of the price revolution was a rise in the population of Europe. This created a growing demand for food, fuel and clothing. As productivity failed to keep pace with this demand, goods became scarce and prices rose.



Again the sources available to the historian are unsatisfactory: no censuses or reliable estimates exist for any whole country in the sixteenth century. Information has to be pieced together from materials like parish registers, tax returns or muster rolls, which are frequently inaccurate or misleading. All the available evidence, however, points to a general rise in the population of Europe during the century. Some towns even doubled in size. In 1500 there were only five European cities with 100,000 inhabitants or more; by 1600 the number had grown to twelve or thirteen. The population of London may have gone up from fifty thousand to two hundred thousand. Certainly the city was making very heavy demands on the hinterland for food supplies, as were other towns like Bristol and Norwich.

In 1500 Seville had about sixty thousand inhabitants. During the next two or three decades the number dropped as a result of epidemics and emigration, but it had risen to one hundred and fifty thousand by 1588. Smaller towns expanded to such an extent that they often had to build outside their

The sixteenth century saw the rise of capitalism. It was a time of prosperity for the middle classes engaged in trade and industry.

Above: a money-changer.

Above right: a smartly dressed German burgher on his sledge.

Below right: an apothecary in his shop. Miniatures. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)



walls and in the large cities there was much overcrowding. The growth in population was also felt in the countryside where there was fierce competition for limited amounts of farm land. Yet by modern standards sixteenth century Europe was thinly populated: the population of England rose from three and a half million in 1500 to five million in 1600 and that of the Holy Roman Empire from twelve to twenty million.

Population growth and the price revolution

It is not difficult to see how the rise in population of the sixteenth century would affect prices. Wherever peasants farmed their land on temporary leases landlords could, and often did, raise their rents. Those tenants who could not afford the new rents left the land and either joined the armies of vagabonds who roamed about the countryside or flocked to the towns.

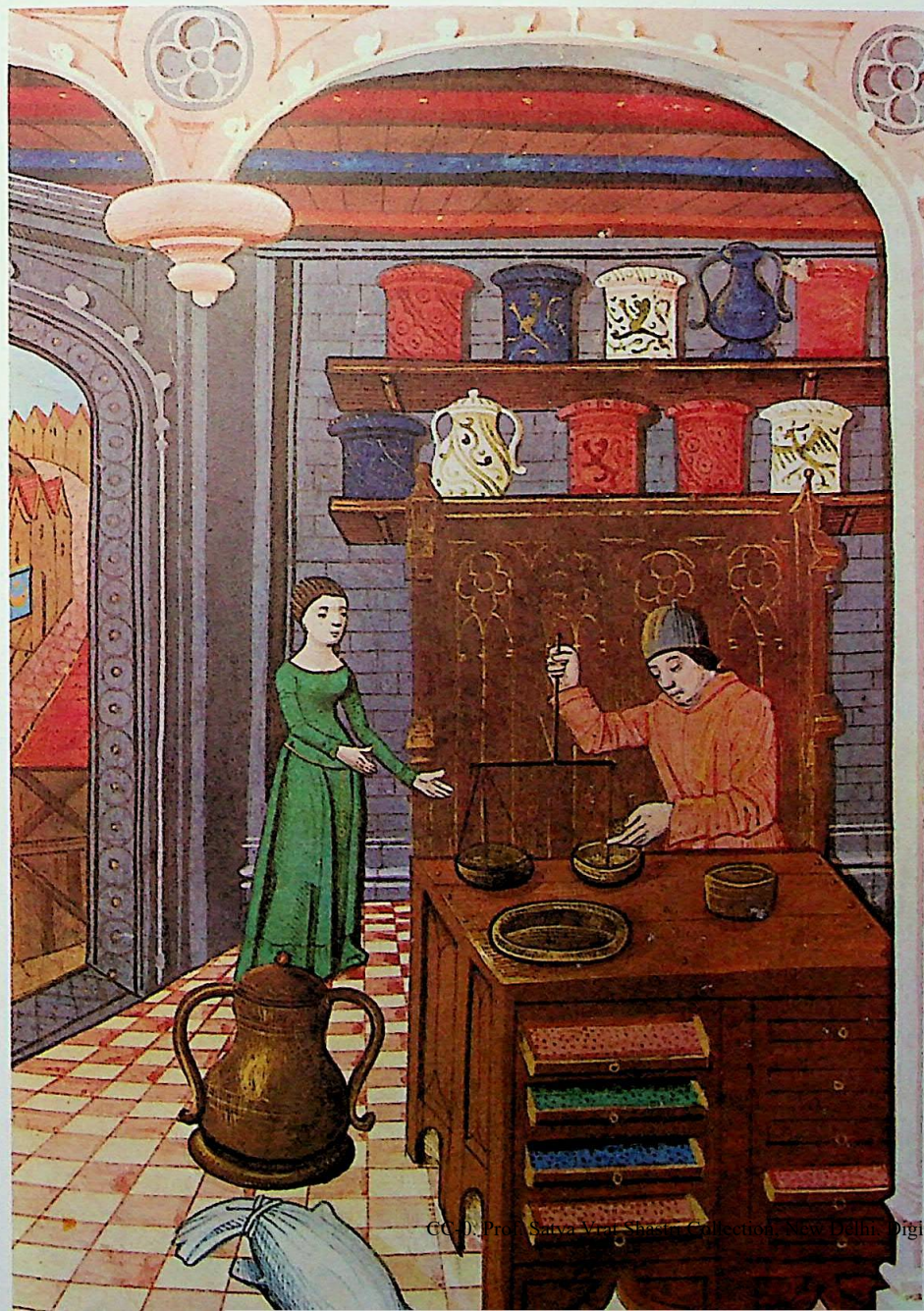
The rise in population meant an increased demand for food. To some extent this was met by improved methods of agriculture and the introduction of new crops such as rice in the Po valley. But most European farmers were illiterate and unable to read the new manuals of husbandry or, if they could, they lacked the capital necessary to carry out the improvements recommended. Consequently demand outstripped supply.

The price of other agricultural products was also affected by the rise in population. Until about 1550 wool prices in England and Spain (the only two countries which produced wool for an international market) rose even more rapidly than grain prices. This encouraged landlords to turn arable land into pasture. They enclosed common land and depopulated villages to make room for their flocks. This inevitably aggravated the problem of food supplies.

In Spain sheep-farming was practised on a huge scale in Castile where the soil and the climate were not favourable to other forms of cultivation. Each year enormous flocks of sheep were moved from the mountains of Old Castile to winter in the south. They were supposed to follow certain predetermined tracks but would often damage crops and cause soil erosion. Continual disputes arose between ordinary farmers and the guild of sheep-farmers, called the Mesta, which enjoyed the full backing of the crown.

In 1501 the Mesta was given the right to use for ever and at fixed rents any land it had once used as pasture. The Spanish monarchy supported the Mesta in this way because it received a quick and sure revenue from taxes on sheep and the sale of wool. Arable farming was discouraged by this policy and Spain accordingly suffered from a serious shortage of grain. After 1506 it became more independent on foreign imports.

Spain was not the only country which failed to produce enough food for its growing population. After a severe famine in 1590-91 all the countries bordering on the



western Mediterranean had to import grain from the Baltic. More Dutch and Hanseatic ships than ever before passed through the Sound between Denmark and Sweden laden with rye from Poland, Prussia and Pomerania. The newly constructed port of Leghorn (Livorno) became the main distributing centre in Italy for northern grain. The number of ships entering the port shot up from about 200 in 1592-93 to nearly 2,500 in 1609-10. The northerners had better crews and cheaper ships than the Italians, who began to lose the commercial dominance in this and in other aspects of the carrying trade which they had hitherto enjoyed.

If European agriculture failed to cope with the rising demand for food, the manufacturing industries proved more adaptable. Most of them did not require much fixed capital and they could use the increased labour force available. Only the guilds with their regulations limiting the number of apprentices and journeymen a master might employ stood in the way of greater productivity. But capitalist entrepreneurs could always go into the countryside or small country towns, where the people were only too glad to earn a little extra money by spinning and weaving at home. Alternatively the capitalists could take over the guilds and employ the master craftsmen on piece rates. Because the manufacturing industries were better able to keep abreast of the rising demand the price of their products did not go up as much as that of grain.

Social effects of the price revolution

Although wages tended to go up in the sixteenth century they were seldom able to catch up with prices. In England and other countries, for example, the wages of building workers doubled during the century but food prices rose four or five times above their original level. It cannot be doubted, then, that wage earners were worse off in terms of real wages at the end of the century than at the beginning. This is even if one allows for the fact that retail prices did not go up as much as wholesale ones and that manufactured goods cost relatively less than food.

When the disparity between wages and prices became apparent about 1530 a serious undercurrent of discontent developed among the labouring poor and occasionally it flared up into open revolt. If unemployment and low wages became combined with revolutionary religious propaganda the result could be devastating, as was shown by the Anabaptist take-over of Münster in 1534. Only those wage-earners who held land fixed at the old rate actually benefited from the price revolution, since, as their rent declined in value, they were able to get more for their surplus produce on the local market.



The Dutch played a prominent part in the search for a North-east passage to the Far East in the sixteenth century. In 1596 Willem Barents (whose ship is seen above) discovered Bear Island, where he had a two-hour battle with a polar bear (above right). He then rounded Novaya Zemlya only to be trapped and forced to winter in Ice Haven (far right).

Right: an Eskimo. Engravings from Spilbergen's contemporary account of the voyage. (Academia das Ciencias de Lisboa.)





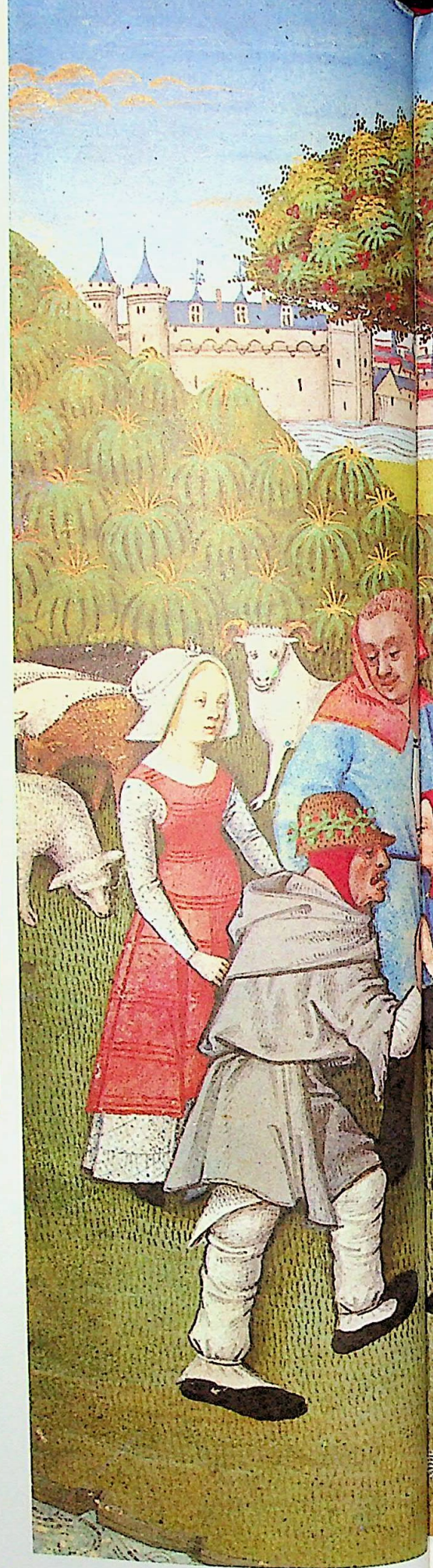
Agriculture in the sixteenth century was not able to meet the increased demand for food caused by a rising population. As a result peasants were able to get more for their produce.

Above: gathering the harvest.

*Right: a country dance. Miniatures.
(Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*

Much has been written about the so-called 'rise of the gentry' in sixteenth-century England but the picture is still far from clear. Some country gentlemen who held moderately large estates certainly did very well at this time, but it is difficult to say whether their success was due to favourable market conditions or to royal favour. Other members of the gentry declined but no one has yet been able to work out exactly the ratio of 'declining' to 'rising' gentry. Nor was there anything new about merchants investing their capital in land with a view to becoming gentlemen or even members of the aristocracy. English society had always been fluid and the expanding economy of the sixteenth century simply offered wider opportunities for the movement of persons and capital.

A similar dearth of statistical evidence





precludes a clear assessment of the effects of the price revolution on rural society in other parts of Europe. In Hainaut, and perhaps in the other Walloon provinces of the Netherlands, owners of reasonably large estates did better out of rising prices than smaller landowners. In France, on the other hand, it would seem that the lesser nobility were less successful in adjusting their rents to the economic situation. This would explain why so many were ready to join the armies engaged in the Wars of Religion. It is possible, however, that most of these were younger sons who had suffered as a result of the legal devices employed by their seniors to prevent the fragmentation of their estates.

On the whole the nobility in France, Spain and Italy managed to weather the storm of the price revolution quite well by raising rents or entry fines (premiums on transferring tenancies) at least as fast as prices, and by exacting feudal dues and seigneurial monopolies. The upper nobility received gifts of pensions, lands and offices from the crown in return for their military and administrative services.

In Germany the social effects of the price revolution varied from one locality to another. In the west the nobility found it difficult to raise rents except in Bavaria and Austria where the ruling princes supported their claims to raise entry fines. In south-west Germany the princes provoked a considerable amount of peasant unrest by substituting autocratic Roman law for local custom, by taking over village and seigneurial jurisdiction and by imposing new taxes.

In Holstein and Denmark the nobles profited from high prices by acting as middlemen between the peasants and foreign merchants seeking grain and dairy produce. In north-east Germany and Poland they made the most of the growing market for rye, timber and furs in western and southern Europe. They raised a cheap labour force to farm their huge demesnes by tying the peasants to their holdings and exacting heavy labour services from them. The local princes did nothing to protect the peasants from this 'new serfdom' as they depended on the landowners or *Junkers* for money grants.

The golden age of Antwerp

European expansion overseas widened the scope of international trade and stimulated far-reaching changes in its organisation and methods.

In the course of the sixteenth century the main focus of international trade shifted from the Mediterranean to the North Sea and the Atlantic, and Antwerp rose to a pre-eminent position. Within fifty years this city attracted to itself a high proportion of Europe's trade, becoming at the same time one of the largest money markets and an industrial centre. It has been called 'the London, Manchester and Oldham of the sixteenth century'. Its population rose from



about fifty thousand in 1500 to around one hundred thousand in 1550, and these figures do not include a large floating population of foreign merchants.

Experience had shown that Lisbon was not a convenient centre for the distribution of spices to the rest of Europe. The Portuguese needed to exchange them for grain, metals and cloth. For centuries the Netherlands had been an important trading centre accessible to traders from many countries. In 1499, therefore, the Portuguese decided to establish their spice staple at Antwerp. Important as this event was, it was not the only reason for the city's golden age. The deepening of the river Scheldt linking Antwerp to the North Sea enabled ships, which had been obliged previously to anchor in the estuary, to go up river and unload directly at the port instead of having to tranship their cargoes. As a result the number of ships paying anchorage dues rose steeply during the century.

Antwerp was situated close to a network of rivers leading to the south. It was the terminus of a comparatively toll-free land route from Germany, so that even before the coming of the Portuguese it was thronged with German merchants who traded mainly in metals and fustians. Many English cloth merchants were there too. All these traders were attracted not only by the city's geo-

graphical situation but also by the favourable conditions attached to its two annual fairs. By the 1540s it was handling eighty per cent of the Netherlands trade and exporting about three times as much as London.

In addition to being a clearing-house for goods, Antwerp imported a considerable quantity of food for its fast-growing population and this in turn gave rise to local industries like fish-curing and sugar-refining. Its main industry, however, was the finishing of English cloth, which necessitated the importation of dyes from southern Europe and America and of alum (used to fix the colours) from the papal states. Antwerp manufactured armaments and church bells and exported a wide range of goods such as furniture, tapestries, paintings, jewellery, glassware, books, paper, maps and musical instruments.

The growth of capitalism

Antwerp was also one of the foremost money markets in Europe. Originally merchants would transact business with each other directly but by the sixteenth century they had begun to work through bankers. These had often started their careers as merchants in various commodities and had then switched to trading in money which offered larger and quicker returns.

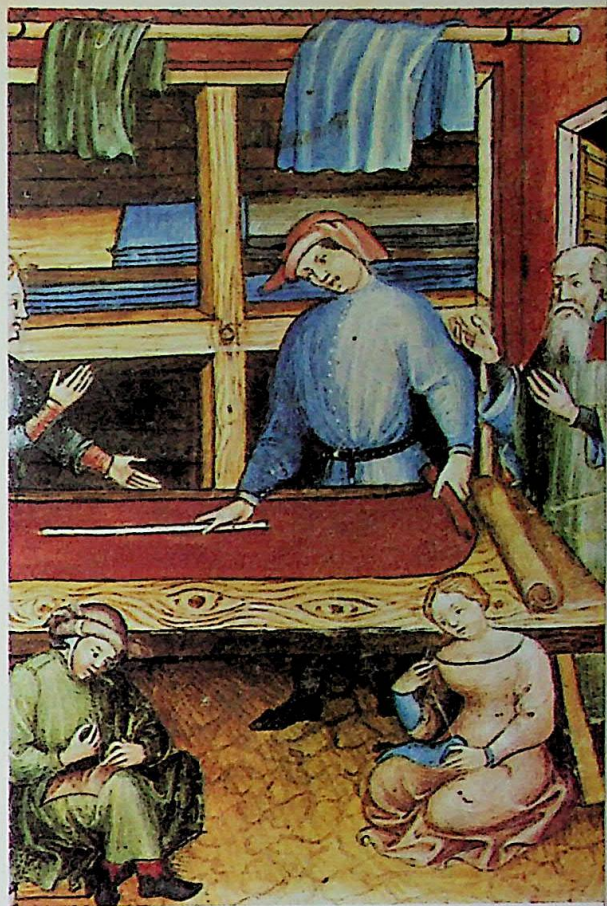


Much of the textile industry in the sixteenth century was organised under the 'putting-out system'. Rural people were only too glad to make a little extra money by spinning or weaving in their own homes.

Left and far left below: women spinning and weaving.

Right: a tailor's shop. Miniatures. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

Below: a well and water-carriers. Engraving. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)



This was true of the great family business of Fugger, based at Augsburg in south Germany. Its fortunes were founded on the cloth trade but in the fifteenth century the scope of its activities was much enlarged by Jacob Fugger the Rich (1459-1525). He added silks and velvets, spices, metals and jewels to the linens and fustians which had been the firm's original commodities. To sell these goods he set up a chain of counting houses and merchandise depots in all the great cities of central and western Europe. At the same time he went into the metal trade, gaining control of the output of silver, copper and iron in central Europe and of silver and mercury in Spain. Jacob Fugger then bought or financed mines.

By the sixteenth century the firm of Fugger had become the leading banking house in Europe. Its wealth was so great that it was even able to come to the rescue of impecunious princes. In return for mining concessions it would do almost anything for the Habsburgs and it was largely owing to its financial assistance that Charles V was elected emperor in 1519. When he delayed over the repayment of his debt Jacob Fugger bluntly reminded him: 'it is well known that your Majesty without me might not have acquired the imperial crown'.

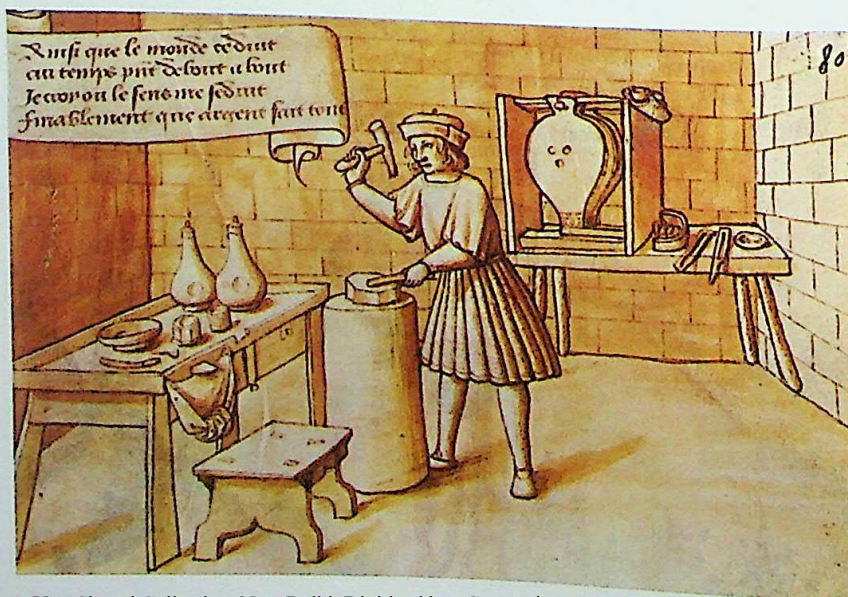
The development of banking was closely bound up with the trade boom of the sixteenth century.

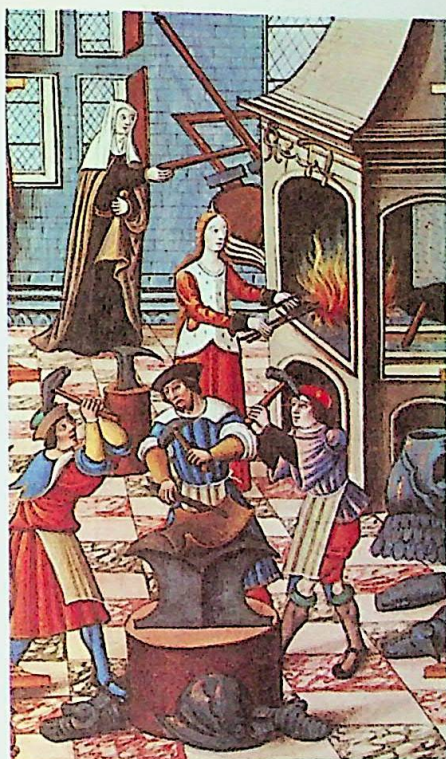


The rising demand for food in the sixteenth century led to increased local specialisation. Viticulture tended to move from areas where the climate was unsuitable to sunnier parts. Right: a wine-harvest. Detail of a tapestry. (Musée de Cluny, Paris.)

Above: a potter.

An acute gold-hunger was one motive behind European expansion in the fifteenth century. Below: a goldsmith. Drawing. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)





Above left: an armorer. His craft continued to flourish in the sixteenth century in spite of the development of firearms. Above right: stone masons erecting a pillar. Left: smiths at work. Miniatures from *Chants Royaux* (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)



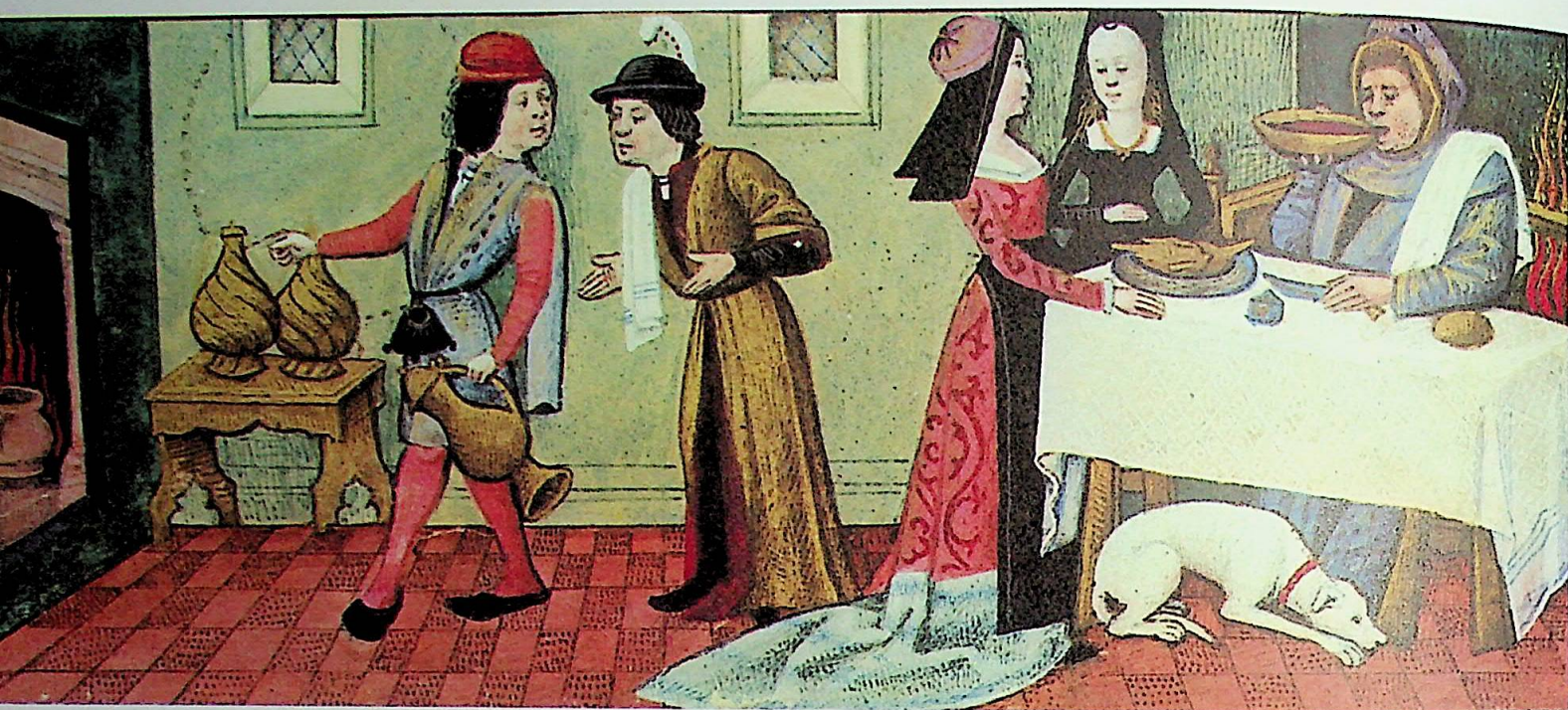
sixteenth century. Few merchants ever paid cash in Antwerp: they bought and sold their goods by means of bills of exchange provided by the bankers. They relied on advances and settled their accounts by instalments. The complex transactions that took place offered incomparable opportunities for speculation. At first, interest rates were high and erratic but they settled down by the 1540s to between twelve and fifteen per cent. Henry VIII of England borrowed about a million pounds on the Antwerp market during the last four years of his reign.

The sixteenth century was an age of feverish speculation. The stock-exchanges of Antwerp and Lyons were permanent establishments unlike the old medieval fairs which had been held only from time to time. Merchants setting off on long voyages at sea began to insure their lives. State lotteries and loans made their appearance. An inno-

vation deserving special notice was the creation of the *rentes sur l'Hôtel de Ville* in 1522. The French king, Francis I, obtained a loan from the general public against the security, not of the state, but of the municipal government of Paris. In return the lenders were promised an annual *rente* representing an interest of about eight per cent. In 1555 Henry II launched the *Grand Parti* (Great Deal) of Lyons which started a great rush of investors.

The decline of Antwerp

The golden age of Antwerp was short-lived. In 1549 the Portuguese, finding that they could get silver more easily and cheaply from Spain and that the Germans were willing to trade directly with Lisbon, withdrew their spice staple. This blow was followed by the collapse of the English cloth trade. As a result of the English government's devaluation of silver in 1550, the Merchant



Adventurers were able to export a record amount of cloth to Antwerp, causing a temporary glut. When sterling was revalued in the following year the price of cloth shot up and the trade suffered a setback from which it never fully recovered during the rest of the century.

All this coincided with a slump in the Spanish-American trade, a renewal of war between the king of France and the emperor, two successive harvest failures and a round of national bankruptcies. The Spanish government transformed all its debts into state bonds or *juros*. Its example was soon followed by the Netherlands, French and Portuguese governments. As a result the Antwerp bankers defaulted on their obli-

gations and the small investors who had financed the government loans were severely hit. The final blows were struck after the outbreak of the Dutch revolt. In 1576 Antwerp was sacked by Spanish troops, and in 1585 the Scheldt was closed by the Dutch.

Protestantism and capitalism

How far was the rise of capitalism connected with the Reformation? In 1904 the German sociologist, Max Weber, argued that the Protestant concept of the 'calling'—the interpretation of worldly avocations as divinely appointed and fulfillable in a spirit of worship—enabled the Protestant to pursue his daily life energetically and profitably.

Many prosperous bourgeois in the sixteenth century invested their capital in land; some acquired titles of nobility.

Top: meal-time in a middle-class household and (above) servants killing a pig.

Miniatures from the Hours of Charles d'Angoulême. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

Right: a fifteenth-century walled garden. Miniature. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)





The Roman Church, he alleged, had condemned the world and opposed economic development, particularly the taking of interest. The Protestant ethic was thus seen as the essential prerequisite for the growth of modern capitalism. Finally, Weber argued, capitalism had developed to a greater extent in Protestant than in Catholic countries, while the Reformation had found its most enthusiastic followers among traders and industrialists.

Attractive as the Weber thesis may seem, it does not stand up well to an investigation of the facts. Capitalism existed before the Reformation and the late medieval Church was not totally opposed to the taking of interest. In the late fifteenth century the Franciscans established benevolent funds for loans to the poor and charged interest on them to cover administrative costs. The Lateran Council of 1515 recognised the

impossibility of interest-free loans. Thus Calvin was not being revolutionary when he grudgingly defended usury at five per cent in certain carefully guarded circumstances. Protestant preaching consistently denounced acquisitiveness as sinful. The concept of the calling certainly implied that a man could serve God in the world, but it did not suggest that profit should be his main object in life.

It is also not true to say that capitalism reached its fullest expression in Protestant as distinct from Catholic countries. It was strong in the Netherlands long before Calvinism got there and it hardly existed in Calvin's own stronghold of Geneva. Jacob Fugger, who once declared his intention to continue enlarging his fortune as long as he could, was not a Protestant. In short, no good reason exists for linking Protestantism and capitalism in any significant way.

This map shows that a lively international trade existed in the late middle ages. Its centre was still the Mediterranean but, with the opening up of the Cape route to the Spice islands in the Far East and of the trade in precious metals with the New World, the Atlantic was becoming more important.



The Reformation

*As the Middle Ages draw to a close a deep spiritual unrest affects Christendom;
Luther, Calvin and others openly challenge the authority of the Roman Church.
The Reformation soon degenerates into violence.*

The Reformation was far more than a movement directed against abuses in the Roman Church; it was the culmination of a complex situation with roots deeply buried in the medieval past.

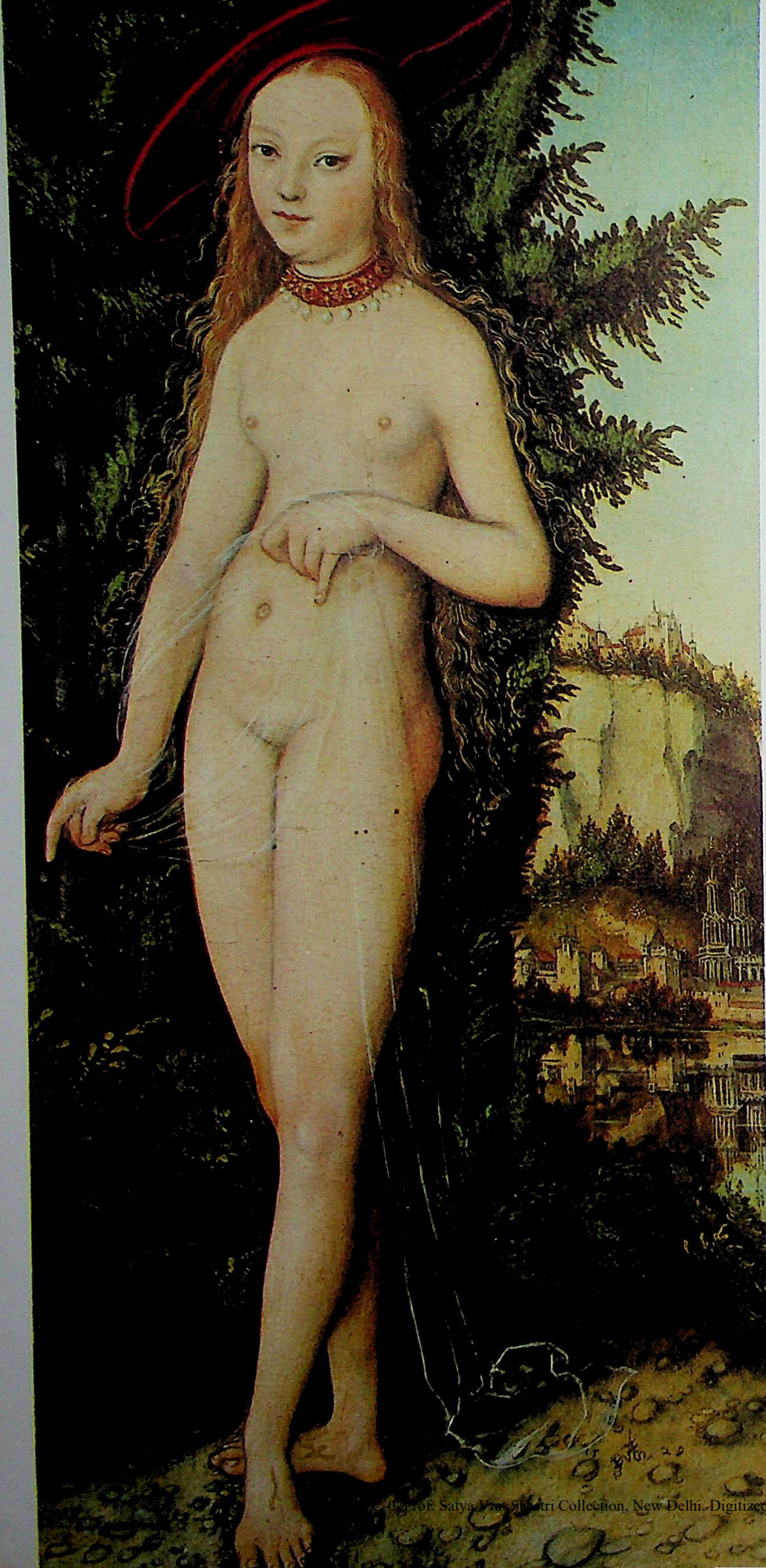
The condition of the medieval Church

Serious abuses did exist, of course, in the Church on the eve of the Reformation. One of the most widespread was pluralism, the accumulation of more than one benefice in the hands of one man. Often this was economically justified. In an age of inflation

it was not always possible for a clergyman to live on the income of a single benefice; so he obtained a papal dispensation to hold more than one. Pluralism was spiritually insidious, however, for it necessarily entailed absenteeism and the neglect of pastoral duties.

Another common abuse was clerical ignorance. Few educational opportunities existed even for the clergy outside the universities, and only a relatively small proportion of clergymen were graduates properly equipped to teach the faith. Among the regular clergy there was a fair amount of laxity about the observance of monastic

Above: portrait of Nicholas Kratzer (1487-1550) by Hans Holbein (Louvre, Paris.) A German by birth, Kratzer entered Henry VIII's service and taught Sir Thomas More's daughters astronomy.



Left: 'God's highest gift on earth', Luther once said, 'is a pious, cheerful, God-fearing, home-keeping wife, with whom you may live peacefully, to whom you may entrust your goods and body and life'. Cranach's ideal woman may be seen in his painting of Venus on the right. (Louvre, Paris.)

Right: three young ladies by Lucas Cranach (1472-1553), court-painter to Frederick the Wise, elector of Saxony, who was also Luther's patron. (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.)

rules: the choral office was neglected, the refectory abandoned, fasting neglected, silence at meals ignored and the teaching of novices was inadequate. At the highest level of the Church nepotism was a serious problem. One of the worst offenders in this respect was Pope Sixtus IV, who created his nephews cardinals or made them lords of cities. The Renaissance popes generally were much more concerned with their temporal interests in Italy than with their responsibilities as spiritual leaders.

**The demand for reform:
pope or general council?**

Clerical abuses were a cause of anti-clericalism in the late Middle Ages, but they had always existed and churchmen realised the need to remedy them. Decline and renewal were normal processes in the evolution of the Church, which had been largely built up by successive generations of reformers. The Reformation was not primarily a



movement of the laity against the clergy. It was largely a movement of the clergy against the growth of centralisation in the Church.

The crisis in the Church was constitutional as well as moral. The papacy had become an absolute monarchy: it controlled ecclesiastical appointments through the system of 'reservations' and 'nominations' and it taxed the clergy by means of annates (payments claimed by the pope from the first year's revenue of a new benefice) and tenths (ten per cent on all clerical incomes). This caused much discontent among the clergy and the demand arose for a reform of the Church in its head as well as its members. But who was to carry out this reform? Could the papacy be trusted to reform itself?

In the fourteenth century the theory was advanced that the responsibility of reforming the Church lay with a general council of the Church, not with the pope. A disputed election to the papacy in 1378 enabled the conciliarists to put their ideas into practice.

If the Council of Constance (1414-18) succeeded in healing the Great Schism, it failed to curb papal authority and the Council of Basle (1431-49) was equally unsuccessful. By their radicalism the conciliarists had unconsciously harmed the cause of reform, for the popes were thereafter reluctant to call another council, fearing that their authority would be challenged. As a result reform was left to the initiative of individuals whose activities were necessarily limited to particular religious houses or dioceses.

Church versus state

The constitutional conflict within the Church was paralleled by another crisis caused by the emergence of powerful secular forces. The kings and princes of Europe wanted complete mastery of their own states. They aimed at controlling the lives, thoughts and pockets of their subjects. The Church, with its own legal and fiscal organisation cutting

across national boundaries, was an obstacle in the path of the royal efforts to achieve a centralised administration. Friction between Church and state had always existed, but it now reached a dangerous intensity. The Reformation often took the form of a movement by national lay rulers to achieve their independence from an international Church which had outlived its day.

Finally the Reformation was a reaction against the doctrinal teaching of the Church which had ceased to satisfy large sections of the clergy and laity. Throughout Europe the late fifteenth century was marked by a profound spiritual restlessness. People were no longer content to accept the truth, they wanted to understand it. As the Renaissance helped to sharpen their minds they began to re-examine the sources of Christianity, particularly the writings of St Paul.

It is undeniable that a connection existed between the Renaissance and the Reformation but, as the quarrel between Erasmus and



Luther over the question of free will was to demonstrate, a deep ideological gulf divided the two movements. Whereas Renaissance scholars believed in man's ability to better himself by his own efforts, the leaders of the Reformation saw him as utterly incapable of achieving salvation without God's grace.

Luther

Martin Luther was born on 10 November 1483 at Eisleben, on the edge of the Thuringian forest. Though a miner, his father, Hans, was not poor and soon after Martin's birth he moved to Mansfeld where he became part owner of six shafts and two foundries and a town councillor. He was thus able to give Martin a good education.

Early life

Luther's childhood appears to have been perfectly normal. His parents were serious, hard-working and devout, but not unduly strict or cruel. As a schoolboy Luther mastered Latin and became a good musician. In 1501 he was sent to the University of Erfurt, where he gained the reputation of being cheerful, witty, hard-working and devout.

Religion already meant so much to Luther that he decided not to become a lawyer, as his father had intended, but to enter the Order of Augustinian Hermits in Erfurt. It is often said that he reached this decision after he had narrowly escaped death in a thunderstorm, but he really made up his mind after a long search for God.

From an early age Luther was deeply pre-occupied with the question of his own salvation. As a monk and a priest he did all the customary acts of penance: he deliberately inflicted pain upon himself by beating his own body, and spent hours confessing his sins, but peace of mind continued to elude him. In 1510 he was sent to Rome but he returned disillusioned. 'Like a fool', he said later, 'I took onions to Rome and brought back garlic.'

In 1511 Luther was transferred to Wittenberg where he was persuaded to take his doctorate and become a preacher. But he was still groping for the truth. God appeared to him as a demanding and angry judge, not as a gracious and merciful father. His vision of God was at times so terrifying that he once compared it with seeing the Devil.

Then came the light. In 1513 as he was preparing his lectures on the Psalms he began to question the traditional meaning given to the biblical term 'righteousness'. He turned to the text in the first chapter of St Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*: 'For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.' Gradually Luther began to see righteousness in a new light: as a forgiving righteousness, not as a punitive one, whereby God reconciled sinful man to Himself. 'When I had realised this', he wrote, 'I felt myself absolutely born again. The gates of

Left: portrait of Martin Luther by Lucas Cranach, who became his friend and disciple. (Musée de Chantilly.)

Below: a heavily armoured man-at-arms. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)



Paradise had been flung open and I had entered. There and then the whole of Scripture took on another look to me. . . .

The ninety-five theses

From this time onwards Luther devoted himself to the task of revealing the truth to his fellow men by liberating Scripture from the false interpretation of the schoolmen. He did not become widely known, however, until November 1517 when he protested against the sale of indulgences by posting up his famous ninety-five theses on the door of the castle church at Wittenberg.

Indulgences were papal certificates releasing men from some of the penalties of sin, and a famous case of their misuse occurred when Albert of Hohenzollern declared that he wished to become archbishop of Mainz. He already held the sees of Magdeburg and Halberstadt, although he was not old enough to be a bishop at all. The pope was prepared to overlook these impediments in return for the enormous fee of ten thousand ducats. As Albert did not have the money he borrowed it from the Fuggers. The pope assisted him to repay the loan by authorising a sale of indulgences on condition that half the proceeds would go to the Fuggers and half to the rebuilding of St Peter's in Rome.

Although the certificates of indulgence were carefully worded to exclude the notion that divine forgiveness could be purchased and sold, John Tetzel, who hawked them around in Saxony, indulged in unscrupulous salesmanship. He pointed to the dead souls languishing in the torments of purgatory crying out for relief. 'As soon as the coin in the coffer rings', he explained, 'the soul from purgatory springs.'

When Luther was told about Tetzel's activities he remarked: 'I'll knock a hole into his drum', yet his indignation was not provoked by the sale of indulgences so much as the doctrine upon which it was based, which was incompatible with his own belief in justification by faith. He was deeply concerned about the way in which people assumed that an indulgence was a remission not merely of penalty but also of guilt.

The ninety-five theses were not extreme. They were simply intended to start an academic debate. Within a few weeks, however, they were printed and widely circulated in Switzerland and Germany. The Dominicans in Saxony espoused Tetzel's cause and pressed charges against Luther in Rome. But because of the political situation the papacy failed to act swiftly.

The Lutheran revolt

Although the emperor Maximilian was still alive, it was clear that his days were numbered and that a successor would soon have to be elected. From the papacy's point of view the safest candidate was Frederick the Wise, elector of Saxony, who happened to be Luther's lord. Frederick did not sympathise with his attack on indulgences but

was determined that he should be given a fair hearing on German soil.

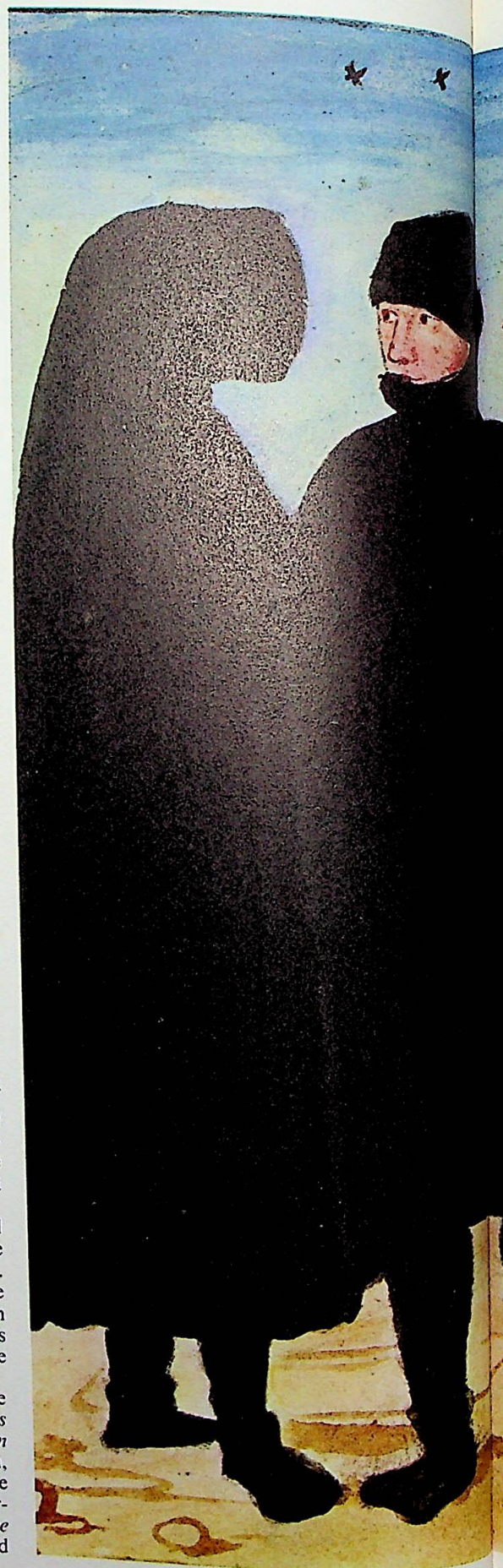
In 1518 Luther was ordered to appear before Cardinal Cajetan at Augsburg. The cardinal urged him to revoke his doctrines without preliminary discussion but Luther refused. In June 1519 he was drawn into a debate at Leipzig with the redoubtable Dominican, John Eck. It began as a harmless metaphysical exchange but soon shifted on to the much more dangerous question of papal authority. Eck was prompted to accuse Luther of Hussitism by his contention that Scripture, not the papacy, was the ultimate authority in religious matters.

After the Leipzig debate Luther published several works in which he elaborated his view of the sacraments. They did not in his view function automatically but through faith in the promises of Christ. He doubted if they numbered more than three: baptism, communion, penance. By 1520 he had rejected the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation according to which, when the priest pronounces the words 'this is my body' the substance of the bread and wine on the altar is changed into the flesh and blood of Christ whilst continuing to look, taste and feel as before. Luther accepted that the bread and wine are the body of Christ but denied that their substance was changed. God, he argued, is everywhere and in everything, and in administering the sacrament the priest merely serves as an agent in the self-disclosure of God. To this extent Luther continued to believe that God was actually present in the sacrament, so that Catholics and Lutherans shared the doctrine of God's Real Presence.

Meanwhile many people rallied to Luther's side without always understanding the fundamental reasons of his protest. Ulrich von Hutten wished to draw him into a national revolt against Rome. Another humanist, Philip Melancthon (1497-1560), became his right-hand man and did much to systematise his theology. The great painter, Albrecht Dürer, belonged to a circle of Lutheran intellectuals at Nuremberg. The Imperial Knights, whose unique constitutional position was being threatened by the territorial princes, also came out in support of Luther.

In June 1520 the pope at last condemned Luther in the bull *Exsurge domine* while allowing him sixty days in which to retract. Luther's retort was to throw into a bonfire the bull along with the whole body of canon law before a gathering of university teachers and students. As a result of this incident he was excommunicated in January 1521.

In the meantime, Luther published three pamphlets of great significance. *The Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, which was written in German, called on the German rulers to reform the papacy and the entire ecclesiastical hierarchy. In *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* Luther outlined his theology and





condemned the papacy for depriving Christians of direct access to God through faith. Yet he had not given up hope of making his peace with the Church. In *The Freedom of a Christian Man* he expounded in a conciliatory tone, for the pope's attention, his idea of the evangelical life, albeit without retracting his views.

The Diet of Worms

The newly elected emperor, Charles V, though not opposed to Church reform or even to a curbing of papal authority, intended to defend the old faith. He feared that rebellion against the Church would easily lead to rebellion against the state. Yet he could not ignore the wishes of the German people and those of the electors, so he agreed to summon Luther to explain himself at the Diet of Worms. Many of the reformer's friends warned him of the dangers of accepting the invitation, even with a safe-conduct in his pocket. But Luther, confident in the power of the Gospel, announced that he would go to Worms even if there were 'as many devils in it as there were tiles on the roofs of the houses'.

When he appeared before the emperor and the Estates he was asked to retract his views, but he refused. He boldly declared:

'Unless I am convinced of error by the testimony of Scripture or by clear reason I cannot and will not recant anything, for it is neither safe nor honest to act against one's conscience. God help me. Amen.'

As no compromise seemed feasible Luther was given permission to return to Wittenberg. On his way through the Thuringian forest, however, he was spirited off by his friends to the Wartburg castle where he remained almost a year. In May 1521 he was placed under the imperial ban, but Charles V could not enforce the edict, so that Luther continued his activities without interruption.

In addition to works condemning priestly confession and absolution, monastic vows and clerical celibacy, he produced in the incredibly short time of eleven weeks a translation into German of the New Testament, five thousand copies of which were sold in two months. Meanwhile, his followers, including many members of the regular clergy, preached his doctrine in the towns. They were joined by all kinds of agitators with views far more extreme than Luther's. At Wittenberg, Carlstadt and Zwingli set out to destroy all that remained of the old religious order. The arrival of the Zwickau 'prophets' coincided with riots in which religious images were destroyed and Luther, who strongly disapproved of violence, had to come out of hiding to restore order. He and his friends then began to construct a Church in accordance with the teaching of the gospel.

With the assistance of printing the Reformation spread rapidly to many parts of the

empire. By 1528 Brandenburg, Brunswick-Lüneburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Mansfeld and Silesia had become Lutheran. The most popular form of Reformation literature was the pamphlet illustrated by woodcuts. Some of these were designed by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553), to whom we are indebted for the best portraits of Luther. Hymns and religious plays also helped to popularise the Reformation. Luther himself composed hymns, the best known being *Ein' Feste Burg* (*God is our refuge*). The poet Heine called it 'the Marseillaise of the Reformation'.

The Peasants' War

Popular as it was the Lutheran movement could not satisfy the social aspirations of the lower orders of German society. The peasants in particular were dissatisfied with their status, which was being depressed by the reception of Roman Law, and wanted to be relieved of many feudal obligations and fiscal burdens. For a time they translated Luther's doctrines into social terms and looked to him as a leader, but if he sympathised with their complaints he was consistently opposed to violent action on their part. However, his *Admonition to Peace* came too late. In June 1524 the Peasants' War had broken out in the Black Forest and it quickly spread to many parts of Germany.

In Saxony and Thuringia Thomas Münzer, a former disciple of Luther, exploited the upheaval to fulfil a mystical vision. Denouncing the princes as 'godless rascals', he issued bloodcurdling orders of the day, signed 'the Sword of Gideon'. Luther was appalled by the turn of events. In *Against the Murdering Hordes of Peasants* he encouraged the princes to 'strike, throttle, thrust, each man who can, secretly or openly and bear in mind that nothing is more poisonous, harmful or devilish than a rebellious man.' Luther feared that the revolt would compromise his own movement, but his attitude was consistent with his theology: civil government and the existing social order were divinely instituted; to rebel against them was an offence against God.

The Peasants' War ended bloodily. When the princes offered terms to the rebels assembled at Frankenhausen, Münzer told them that God had promised them victory and that he would catch the princes' cannon balls in the folds of his cloak. Without cavalry or guns, however, the peasants could do nothing. As the first cannon balls fell upon them they fled in panic and were cut down by the princes' cavalry. Münzer, who was found hiding in a cellar, was tortured and beheaded. As a result of Luther's role

For reasons which were not always religious Luther gained the support of all sections of German society.

Left: a group of soberly dressed town-dwellers. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)

in the Peasants' War his movement lost much of its popular appeal. Many peasants and townsmen, feeling that he had let them down, turned to Anabaptism, a more radical form of Protestantism.

After 1525 the religious situation in Germany became more crystallised. The Catholic princes formed the League of Dessau while the Lutherans banded together at Torgau. Because of the Lutheran majority at the Diet of Speyer in 1526 a law was passed making each prince responsible for his own religious policy. This was revoked three years later by a Catholic majority in the Diet. The Lutherans protested against this decision—hence the term 'Protestant'. But the reformers lacked unity.

In 1529 a conference was called at Marburg to settle differences between the Lutherans and the Zwinglians of Switzerland and south Germany. It failed because Luther and Zwingli could not agree on the interpretation of the communion service or Eucharist. This disunity occurred at the worst possible time, for in 1530 the emperor Charles V was able to turn his attention to Germany. At the Diet of Augsburg the Protestants produced not one confession of faith but three, while the Catholics refused to make any doctrinal concessions.

Zwingli

Huldreich Zwingli (1484–1531) departed from Catholic doctrine in 1519 and more radically than Luther. Whereas the latter adhered to the doctrine of Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist, Zwingli considered the communion service to be simply commemorative. The two reformers also disagreed about baptism, justification by faith and other doctrinal questions.

Fundamentally they differed in their view of human nature. Zwingli was closer to the humanist in his belief that man could acquire faith by studying the Word of God. He was also more of a fundamentalist in that he would accept only practices enjoined by Scripture. Thus, he rejected fasting, clerical celibacy, religious images and church music. His attachment to the Bible was shown by his activities as a preacher and church organiser in Zürich after the bishop's authority had been removed. The Bible was translated and published in Zürich in 1530, four years before the appearance of Luther's German Bible.

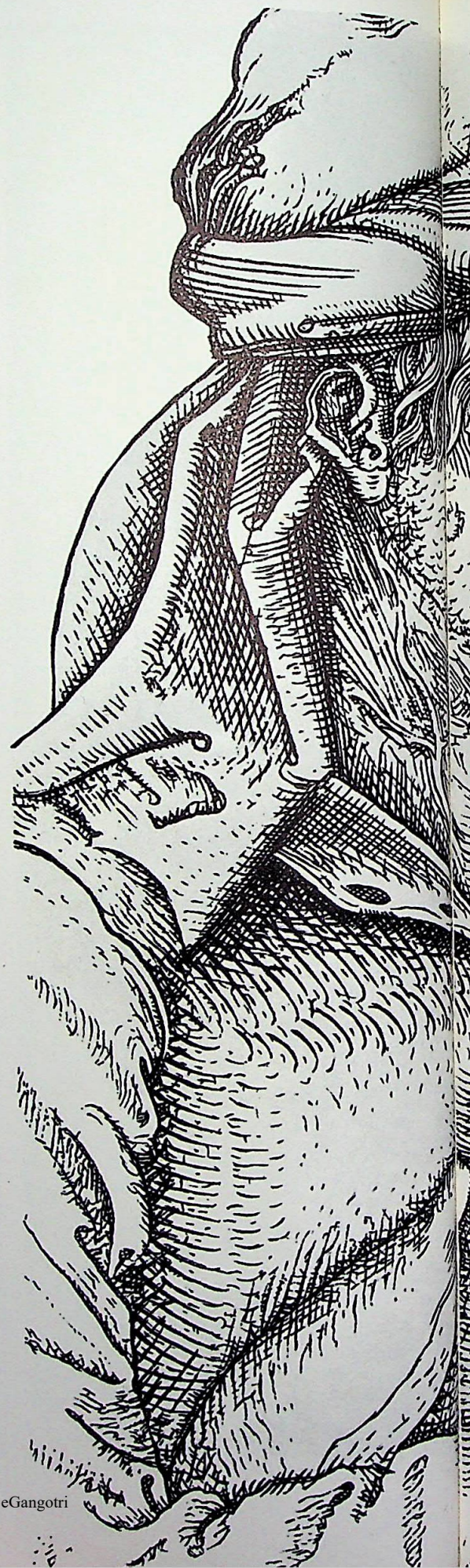
Perhaps Zwingli's most important contribution was the stress he placed on discipline. Under his influence matrimonial and moral questions were submitted to a special court made up of clergymen and city magistrates. This identified Church and state in a way that Luther had never envisaged. Zwingli was the most politically minded of the leading reformers. Having taken part in the Italian wars, he was strongly opposed to the mercenary system and persuaded Zürich to give it up. But the poorer Catholic cantons in

Although the terrible Peasants' War of 1524 coincided with the Lutheran Reformation, it stemmed mainly from economic and social grievances. The rebels misunderstood Luther's idea of liberty which was not of this world.

Far right, above: a knight surrounded by peasants. They are holding the banner of the Bundschuh or Peasant League. Woodcut by H. Weiditz, 1532.

Far right, below: the killing of a bishop and a monk.

Right: a peasant.





the Swiss Confederation depended on it for their livelihood. A war developed between them and Zürich and Zwingli was killed at the Battle of Kappel (October 1531). Thereafter Swiss Protestantism lost its belligerency. Under Heinrich Bullinger (1504–75) it concentrated on its spiritual work.

Anabaptism

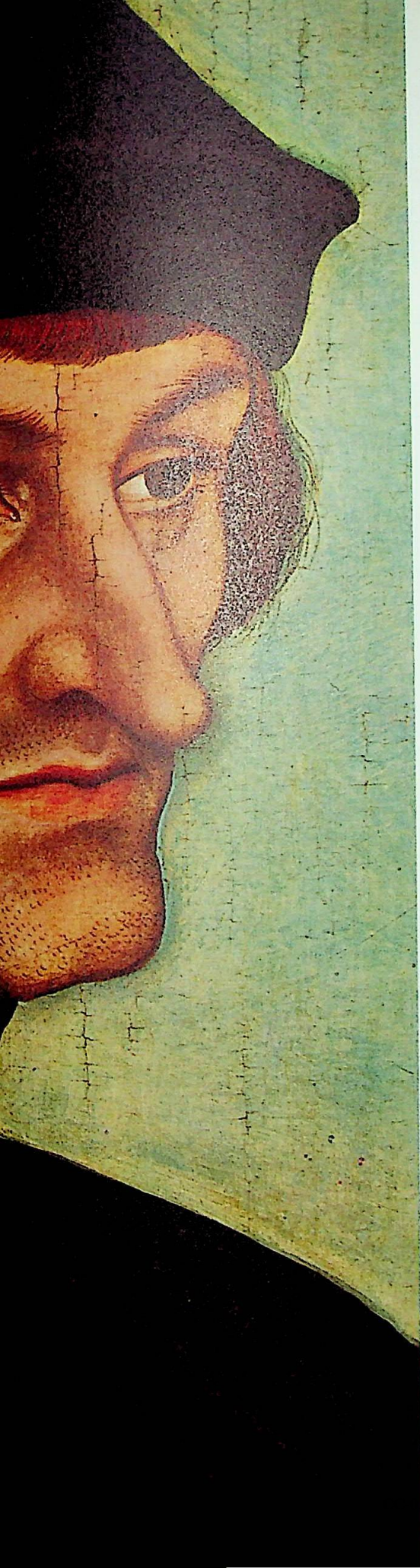
From the start of the Reformation various reformers showed more radical tendencies than Luther or Zwingli. Because they were generally opposed to infant baptism they became known as Anabaptists (from the Greek word for 'baptising again'). However, their views differed widely, ranging from a passive attitude towards life with devotional contemplation (quietism) to the active promotion of Christ's reign on earth (chiliasm). They sprang up in different places more or less simultaneously and lacked any cohesion.

The first known case of an adult baptism was administered in Zürich in 1525 by Conrad Grebel, who argued that a man was not born into a Church but accepted on profession of faith and the promise to lead a holy life. Because they believed that the professed believers were separate from the world, most Anabaptists refused to serve the state in any capacity. As a result they became regarded as a disruptive influence in society and were fiercely persecuted by the civil authorities and by Catholics and Protestants. After their expulsion from Zürich in 1525 they carried their ideas to southern Germany, Upper Austria, Moravia, Hungary, the Netherlands and elsewhere.

One of the Anabaptist leaders in the Netherlands, David Joris, saw himself as the prophet of the coming millenium, but the quietism of his *Book of Wonders* (1542) was not reflected in the careers of Jan Matthys of Haarlem and Jan Beuckelsz of Leyden. They sent out a call to arms against all unbelievers and in February 1534 led a revolution in the episcopal city of Münster in Westphalia. Common ownership of all things on the basis of the Bible was introduced.

When Matthys died in April, Beuckelsz assumed the title of king under the name of Jan van Leyden. His introduction of polygamy and his unbridled brutality caused considerable resentment, facilitating the city's recapture by Philip of Hesse and the local bishop in June 1535. The Anabaptist leaders were tortured to death and their bodies placed in iron cages and hung in the tower of the Lambert church. Vigorous action was taken at the same time against Anabaptists everywhere in Europe. Their movement became respectable only when it was purged of its radical elements under Menno Simons (1496–1561). From East Friesland his congregation spread to many parts of Europe and America.





John Calvin

Whereas Lutheranism remained largely confined to Germany and Scandinavia and soon lost much of its dynamic force, Calvinism spread from France and Geneva to many parts of Europe, seriously threatening the survival of Catholicism in the second half of the sixteenth century.

John Calvin was born at Noyon in Picardy on 10 July 1509. His father, Gérard Cauvin (Calvin being derived from the Latin form of the name), was a lawyer employed by the cathedral chapter. He obtained two benefices for his son and in 1523 sent him to Paris for his education. At the Collège de la Marche he was taught by Mathurin Cordier, an excellent Latin scholar. Then he was moved to the Collège de Montaigu where Erasmus and Rabelais had studied. The damp walls, disgusting food and harsh discipline nearly ruined his health.

In 1528 his father decided to change the direction of his education from theology to law. He was sent to Orléans and to Bourges. Here he also learned Greek and possibly some Hebrew from Melchior Wolmar, a Lutheran scholar. In 1531 Calvin was released by his father's death from the obligation to continue his legal studies. He returned to Paris and devoted his attention to humanism. In April 1532 he published his first work, a commentary on Seneca's *De Clementia*.

The *Institutes of Christian Religion*

No one knows exactly when Calvin first embraced Protestant ideas, but it was probably about 1533 when he became associated with Gérard Roussel and other evangelicals. His conversion soon brought him into trouble with the authorities. In November 1533 his friend, Nicholas Cop, rector of the University of Paris, delivered an inaugural address betraying Lutheran sympathies. This provoked a strong reaction and Calvin, who was suspected of having written the address, escaped to Saintonge, where he may have started work on his *Institutes* in a fine library placed at his disposal by Louis du Tillet. He called on Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, the founder of French evangelicalism, who was living in retirement at Nérac.

After resigning his ecclesiastical benefices Calvin visited Poitiers and Orléans where he preached and administered the Lord's Supper in a Protestant form. In October 1534 a campaign of persecution was unleashed against Protestants after they had affixed posters attacking the Mass in a number of French towns. Calvin fled to Strasbourg and Basle, where the first edition of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was published in March 1536.

Although the *Institutes* was subsequently altered and enlarged, the first edition contained the basic elements of the Calvinistic doctrine. It emphasised the majesty and



The success of Luther's movement was due largely to the support of the German princes.

Above: portrait of John Frederick the Magnanimous, elector of Saxony (1532-54) by Cranach. Evangelical, pious and godly by nature, he did all he could to further the Reformation. Drunkenness was almost his only fault. (Louvre, Paris.)

Left: portrait of Johannes Geiler von Kaisersberg, a humanist and popular preacher in Strasbourg Cathedral (1445-1510), by Lucas Cranach. (Alte Pinakothek, Munich.)

absolute sovereignty of God and the hopeless corruption of man as a consequence of the Fall. Though predestination was implied in this doctrine, Calvin did not lay stress upon it until later.

Another important aspect of his doctrine was the authority which he gave to Scripture, but he made clear that it was not sufficient to read the Bible; it had to be understood and this required the help of the Holy Spirit. He had no time for a purely mystical approach to religion. Finally, while Calvin believed that the true Church was invisible and made up of the elect of God, he also believed in the necessity of a visible Church, independent of, yet related to, the state.

In later years Calvin devoted much of his time to the elaboration, clarification and enlargement of the *Institutes*. The sixth and last edition of 1559 was five times bigger than the first and arranged differently. The first French translation was published in 1541. This was an important event not only for the popularisation of the Reformation but also for the development of French vernacular literature.

The Reformation in Geneva

In 1536, after a journey to Italy, Calvin returned to France to deal with some family business. He then planned to go to Strasbourg but, as the direct road was blocked by an imperial army, he made a detour to Geneva, expecting to stop there only one night. The city, however, was in the midst of a religious revolution led by the fiery French Protestant exile, Guillaume Farel, who persuaded Calvin to remain and help him. Calvin described what happened as follows:

'Farel strained every nerve to detain me. Having learned that my heart was set on devoting myself to private studies he uttered an imprecation that God would curse my retirement and the tranquillity of my studies which I sought if I should withdraw and refuse to give assistance when the need was so pressing. I felt as if God from heaven had laid His mighty hand to arrest me. . . . I was so stricken with terror that I desisted from the journey I had undertaken.'

Because of the strange circumstances which had combined to bring him to Geneva, Calvin believed that he had been commissioned by God to build there a truly Christian community. The task did not prove easy, for the leading citizens of Geneva were motivated by political rather than religious considerations. Having overthrown the authority of the bishop, they undertook 'to live in this holy evangelical law and word of God' and to abandon 'all masses and other papal ceremonies and abuses, images and idols'. When, however, Calvin and Farel tried to enforce discipline among them by means of excommunication they resisted and, following a number of incidents, asked the reformers to leave.





Calvin retired to Strasbourg where he became pastor to the congregation of French exiles and married Idelette of Buren. Although his basic ideas did not change, he developed his views on predestination and church organisation under Bucer's influence.

In Calvin's absence the political and religious situation in Geneva became so chaotic that he was soon invited to return. At the insistence of his friends he decided to follow God's will and reappeared in the city in June 1541. The authorities gave him a beautiful house and garden near the lake and a salary. Helped by six council members he promptly drew up a new constitution for the Genevan Church called the Ecclesiastical Ordinances.

The Genevan Church was allowed more independence than those of Luther or Zwingli. The chief innovation of the ordinances was the recognition of the four offices of pastor, teacher, elder and deacon. The pastors, numbering five at first, constituted the venerable company. They were responsible for preaching the Gospel, administering the sacraments and admonishing members. New pastors were elected by the venerable company with the approval of the city council.

Frequent services were provided in Geneva's three parishes. The teachers who had the duty of instructing the young in 'sound doctrine' were examined by a two-man committee. The twelve elders were laymen responsible for the enforcement of discipline. Each supervised one of Geneva's twelve districts and was expected to visit each family at least once a year. The deacons assisted the pastors in supervising poor relief, visiting the sick and needy and administering the city hospital.

The central part of the constitution of the Genevan Church was the consistory made up of the twelve elders and five pastors. It gathered once a week to admonish, reprimand and correct citizens who had opposed the official doctrine, stayed away from church or behaved in an un-Christian way. The consistory, which could also excommunicate, undertook its work with more enthusiasm than tact. Citizens were summoned before it for the most trivial deviations from the straight and narrow path.

while more serious offences were punished with great severity. Between 1542 and 1546 seventy-six persons were banished from Geneva and fifty-eight executed for heresy, adultery, blasphemy or witchcraft.

Opposition to Calvin: the Servetus affair

For the first five years after his return to Geneva Calvin got along relatively well with the city authorities. He helped to recodify the city's laws and revise the constitution and his advice was sought on many matters ranging from defence to fire prevention. Yet his leadership was seriously challenged after 1545 when a number of prominent citizens strongly objected to the consistory's activities. In the end, however, he managed to assert his authority.

Calvin's hold on Geneva depended on the faithful exercise of his duties as preacher and teacher. He was, therefore, very zealous in maintaining 'the pure doctrine' and in rooting out heresy. Sebastian Castellio was banished for denying the inspiration of the Song of Solomon, while Jerome Bolsec suffered the same fate after he had argued that the doctrine of predestination implied that God was the cause of all sin.

In August 1553 Michael Servetus, who had published books repudiating the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, was foolhardy enough to visit Geneva. He was at once arrested, tried and burnt. Calvin justified the execution in *A Defense of the Orthodox Faith*, but Castellio protested against this use of force. In *Concerning Heretics, Whether they are to be Persecuted* he argued that to burn heretics was contrary to Christ's merciful teaching. Most Protestant leaders, however, sided with Calvin. After the Servetus affair his authority in Geneva was unchallenged and in 1559 he was made a citizen.

The triumph of Calvinism

An event of prime significance for the development of Calvinism was the founding of the Genevan Academy in June 1559. Its first rector was the French humanist, Theodore Beza (1519-1605), who eventually succeeded Calvin as leader of his movement. The academy was divided into a primary or

Left: the French reformer, John Calvin (1509-64), whose Institutes of the Christian Religion was the most systematic and influential formulation of Protestant teaching. The Scottish exile, John Knox, described Calvin's Geneva as '... the maist perfyt schoole of Chryst that ever was in the erth since the dayis of the Apostillis'. Ivory. Sixteenth century. (Bibliothèque Protestante, Paris.)





'private' school, in which the young were taught French, Latin, Greek and the elements of logic, and a secondary or 'public' school, in which Greek, Hebrew, theology and philosophy were taught. Tuition in both was free and the student received a certificate of attendance, not a degree, at the end of his course. At Calvin's death in 1564 the 'private school' numbered 1200 students and the 'public school' 300. The latter were mostly foreigners who carried Calvin's doctrine back to their own countries.

Calvin went further than Luther in encouraging the Christian to serve God through as well as in his calling. His followers participated actively in political, economic and social life. Success in business came to be regarded as evidence of self-denial and hard work to the glory of God. But if Calvin's example encouraged the bourgeois virtues, it is important to remember that he constantly stressed the traditional Christian virtues of self-sacrifice, humility and joy in God's salvation. Contrary to common belief, Calvin did not initiate a law permitting the taking of interest; he simply gave his approval to an existing law protecting the poor from exorbitant rates. The idea that Calvin was responsible for the rise of capitalism is absurd. His chief concern was moral and religious.

When the final edition of the *Institutes* appeared in 1559 Calvin's doctrine was complete and predestination had become central to it. This was not Calvin's invention; it was rooted in Augustinian and scholastic theology and was shared by the other reformers. Calvin simply made its implications clearer.

Predestination means that before the beginning of the world God chose some men (the elect) for eternal salvation, regardless of their merits in life, and left others to suffer eternal damnation, the fate which all men deserve. This doctrine did not lead to fatalism among Calvin's followers; on the contrary, they were confident that God had chosen them for salvation. The elect, according to Calvin, were those who publicly professed their faith and covenant with God, walked in the ways of God and partici-

pated in the sacraments. The clarity of these criteria goes far to explain Calvinistic activism. Certainty of election was accompanied by confidence in the future and hope of establishing a Christian commonwealth on earth.

The spread of Calvinism

The Calvinists were only able to carry out their aims on a large-scale in Scotland and in New England; elsewhere they formed an active minority which tried to overcome all obstacles.

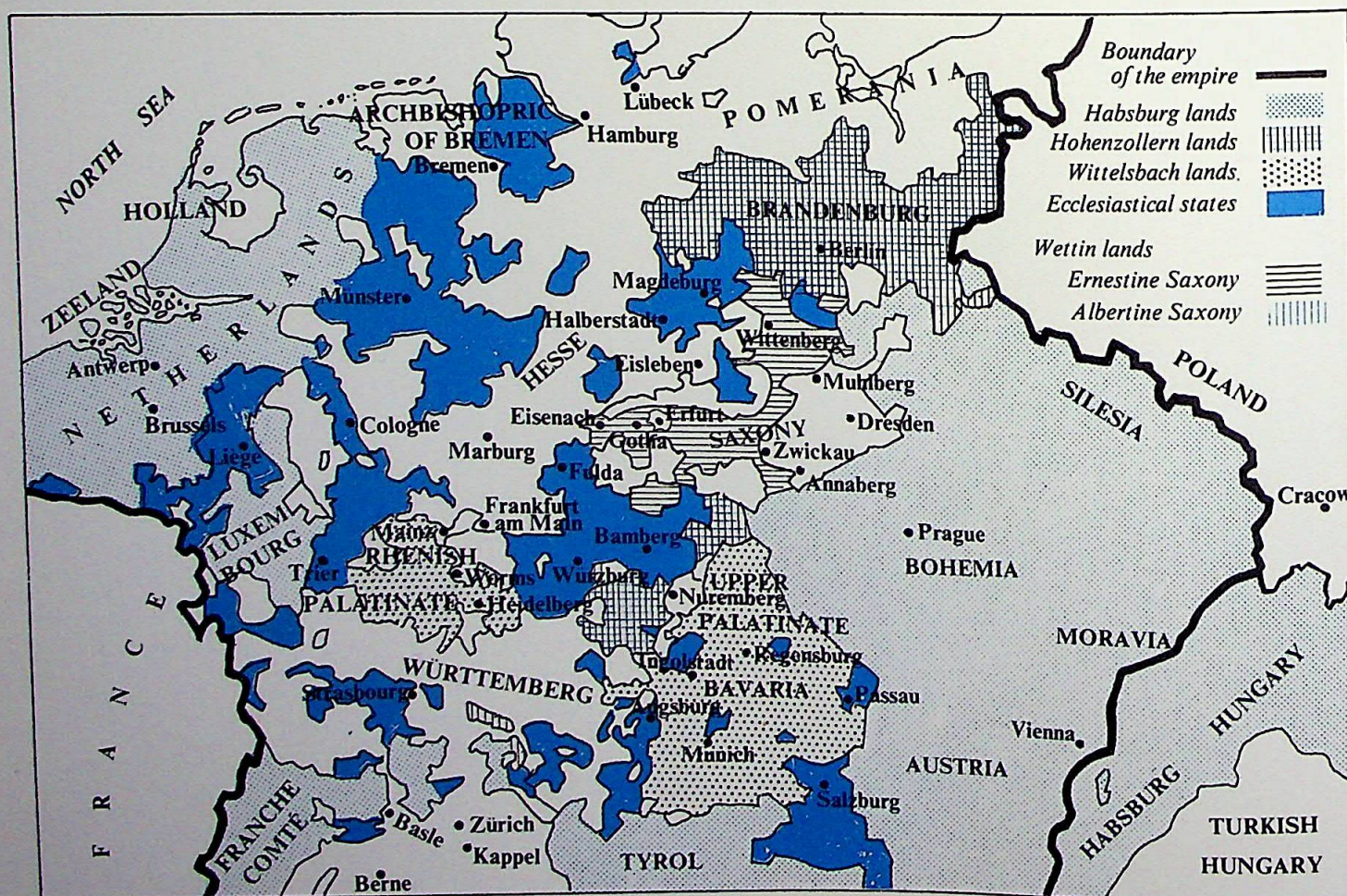
From the beginning Calvin was deeply concerned with the progress of the Reformation in his own native land. The Huguenots, as the French Calvinists were called (the origin of the word is uncertain), formed themselves into small compact groups. They met in heavily curtained rooms or secluded spots in the countryside to worship or read the Bible. As they grew in size pastors trained in Geneva were sent out secretly to attend to their spiritual needs. Despite fierce persecution under Henry II (1547-59) Calvinism continued to gain strength. It was adopted by many nobles and even by some members of the royal family.

In 1555 the first French Calvinist church with a formal church service, regular preaching and administration of the sacraments and a consistory of elders was set up in Paris, and in the next few years similar congregations appeared all over France. They sent their pastors and elders to the first national synod in Paris in 1559, at which a confession of faith was adopted. A centralised organisation was established, consisting of local consistories, regional colloquies, provincial synods and a national synod. By 1561 the national synod represented more than 2000 congregations.

Persecution soon obliged the Huguenots to take up arms against the state. Many were implicated in the Conspiracy of Amboise (March 1560), an unsuccessful attempt to seize the young king, Francis II, and to get rid of his Catholic advisers. Calvin, however, refused to condone rebellion. 'Better', he wrote in 1561, 'that we should all perish one hundred times than that the cause of the Gospel and Christianity should be exposed to such opprobrium'. He sent Beza to take part in a religious debate with the Catholics sponsored by the regent, Catherine de' Medici. Although the Colloquy of Poissy was a failure, a certain measure of toleration was granted to the Huguenots by the edict of January 1562. The result was a strong Catholic reaction led by the duke of Guise and his supporters. In March 1562 some Huguenots were slaughtered in a barn at Vassy. This was followed by other bloody deeds which precipitated the outbreak of the religious wars.

Calvinism penetrated the Low Countries mainly after the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559). It became a strong motive behind

Left: a service in the Lyons temple, called Paradise. Anonymous painting of 1564. (Bibliothèque publique et universitaire, Geneva.) The men, including the pastor, wear hats, the sexes are segregated, comfortable seats are provided for persons of rank and dogs are allowed. An hourglass is intended to limit the preacher's eloquence. Despite the sparse attendance Lyons was one of the main centres of Calvinism in France.



the resistance to Spanish rule which culminated in the outbreak of the Dutch revolt in 1566.

Englishmen first made serious contact with Calvinism when many of them went into exile on the continent under Mary Tudor (1553-58). They hoped that Elizabeth would accede to their wishes on their return and were bitterly disappointed by her religious settlement. Neither wholly Protes-

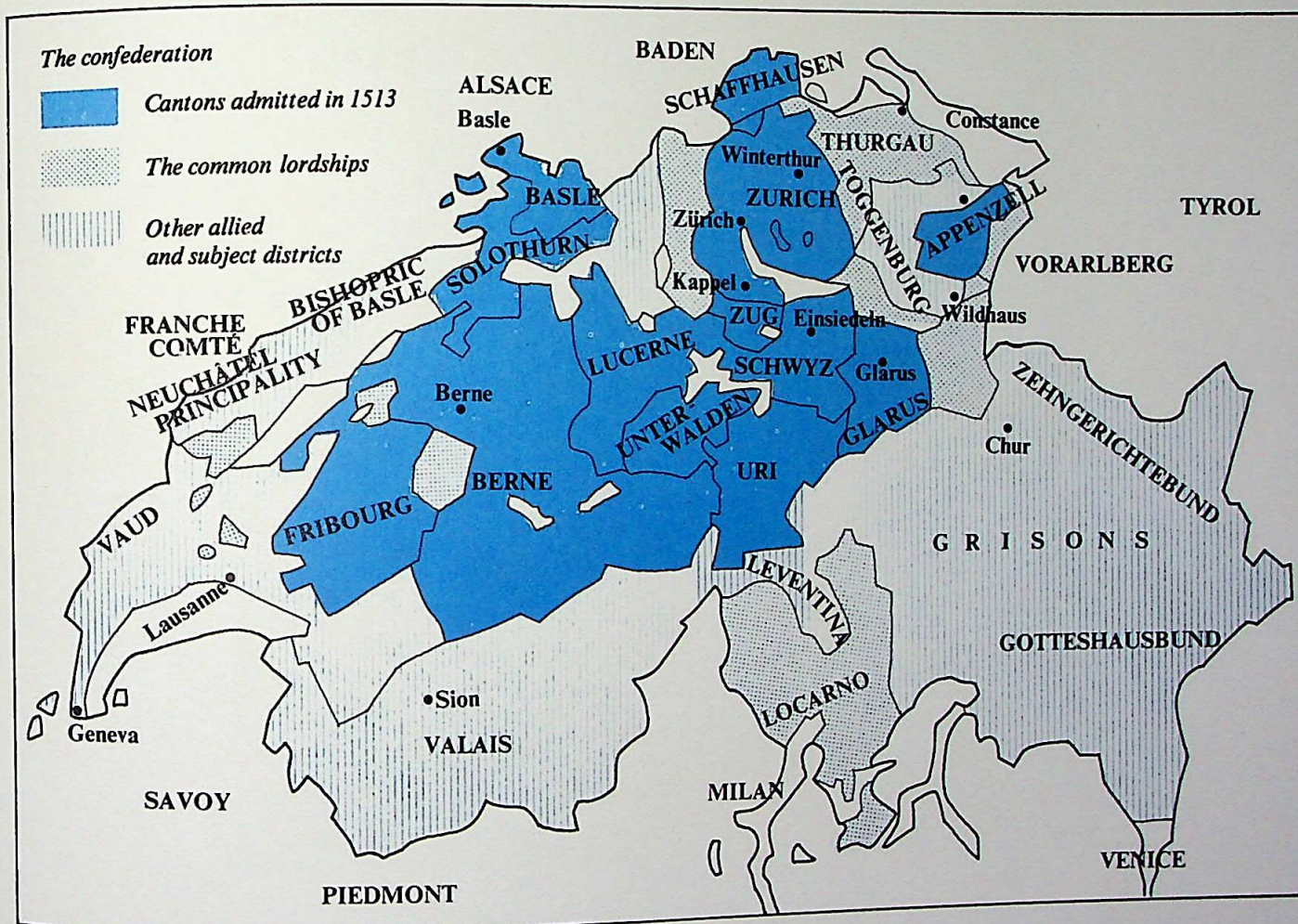
tant nor unashamedly Catholic but uniting elements of both, it threw Protestant enthusiasts into confusion. As a London priest remarked it was 'halfie forward and more than halfie backward'.

John Knox, who had been to Geneva, carried Calvinism to Scotland. The Lords of the Congregation, who opposed Mary Stuart and the French alliance, formed the Scottish covenant in 1557. Following the Treaty of

Edinburgh in 1560 the Scottish Parliament adopted a confession of faith drawn up by Knox.

Within the empire Calvinism took root mainly in the Palatinate, but it also made deep inroads in eastern Europe, notably in Poland and Bohemia.

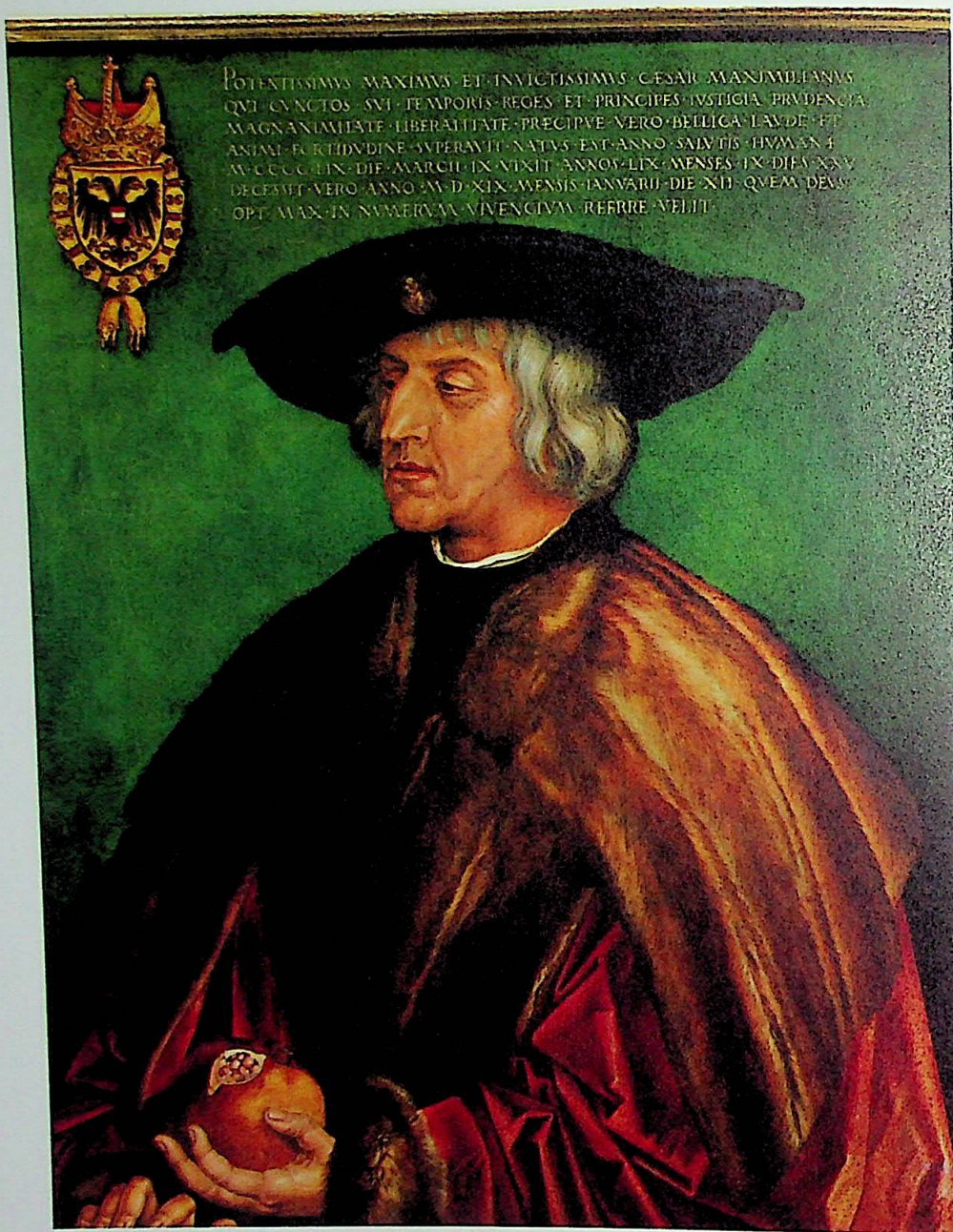
Wherever it established itself it was characterised by a heriocratic certainty which the Wars of Religion were to bring into the open.



Left: heresy and sedition were normally identified in the sixteenth century. Under Henry II (1547-59) the Protestants in France were savagely persecuted. One of the victims was Anne du Bourg, councillor of the Parlement of Paris, who was burnt in Paris on 21 December 1559. Engraving by Tortorel and Périssin. (Musée Carnavalet, Paris.)

The Holy Roman Empire in the sixteenth century comprised a large number of semi-autonomous principalities. The most important of these were the seven electorates, whose rulers chose the emperor. The Protestant Reformation reflected German political disunity as each prince claimed the right to determine the religion of his subjects.

The Swiss confederation was one of the main suppliers of mercenary infantry during the Italian Wars. It also became one of the major centres of the Protestant Reformation. Calvinism spread from Geneva to France, Scotland, the Netherlands and farther afield.



Habsburg-Valois rivalry

Royal power strengthens in sixteenth-century Europe as kings become masters in their own countries; whilst Habsburgs and Valois battle for Europe, the Turks threaten Christendom from the east.

The European political scene in the first half of the sixteenth century was dominated by three young monarchs. Francis I of France (1515-47), Henry VIII of England (1509-47) and the Holy Roman emperor, Charles V (1519-56).

The growth of absolutism in France

The accession of Francis I to the French throne on 1 January 1515 was largely fortuitous. Although he was descended from King Charles V, he was only the cousin and son-in-law of his predecessor and would not have become king if Louis XII had been

Above: the emperor Maximilian (1495-1519), painted shortly before his death by the great German artist, Albrecht Dürer. Though he was always impecunious, Maximilian hoped to revive the Roman Empire on German soil. The open pomegranate in his left hand symbolises the resurrection. (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.)



blessed with a son. At the age of twenty-one Francis seemed the very embodiment of ideal kingship. He was intelligent, lively and quite well educated, eloquent, affable and dignified, brave, proud and ambitious. The English chronicler, Edward Hall, described him as 'a goodly Prince, stately of countenance, mery of chere, broune coloured, great eyes, high nosed, bigge lipped, Faire breasted and shoulders, small legges, and long fete.'

On the debit side Francis was extravagant, impetuous and wilful. He made lavish gifts to his mother, Louise of Savoy, and to his friends, and showed a strong inclination to authoritarianism, which brought him into collision more than once with the Parlement of Paris, the supreme court of justice, whose duty it was to uphold the so-called 'fundamental laws' of the kingdom.

Although the monarchy of Renaissance France has been described as 'popular and consultative', it cannot be doubted that Francis ruled as an absolute monarch. He used every possible means to extort money from his subjects and treated the representatives of the Parlement with brutal disdain if they ever dared to complain of his policies. It is significant that the only representative body at the national level, the Estates-General, was never called during his reign of thirty-two years.

Policy, which was determined by the king and his councillors alone, was consistently directed towards a strengthening of royal power at the expense of surviving feudal liberties. The territorial unification of France was taken a stage further by the formal annexation of Brittany in 1532 and by the confiscation of the Bourbonnais following the treason of its duke in 1523. Some attempt was also made to streamline the machinery of government, notably by the establishment of a central treasury.

Francis I was also an outstanding patron of scholarship and the arts. Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, Benvenuto Cellini, Il Rosso and Francesco Primaticcio were among the great Italian artists who visited his court. He built magnificent *châteaux* or palaces in the valley of the Loire and in and around Paris, including the Louvre, Chambord and Fontainebleau. With the encouragement of the humanist, Budé, he established public lectureships in the classics which eventually developed into the Collège de France.

From the start of his reign Francis was determined to avenge the series of disasters that had befallen French arms in 1513. Like

Left: Jacob Fugger the Rich, the Augsburg banker, with his secretary, Matthäus Schwarz. The names of cities listed on his filing cabinet indicate the scope of his business interests. Miniature of 1519. (Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Brunswick.)



An outstanding patron of learning and Church reformer was Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros, archbishop of Toledo. (Above, left.) (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.) He acted as regent in Spain after the death in



1516 of Ferdinand of Aragon who is seen (above, right) with his wife, Isabella of Castile. (British Museum, London.) Their marriage in October 1469 helped to unify Spain.

every other prince of his time he had been educated for war and already he had gained some experience of fighting in Guienne and Gascony. As the descendant of Valentina Visconti, he too had a claim to the Duchy of Milan, constituting an honorable pretext for aggression. His accession, therefore, did not mark any new departure in French foreign policy; the Italian wars were to continue.

Emperor Charles V

France's most important neighbour was Charles, duke of Burgundy, the future emperor Charles V, a shy and unprepossessing youth of fifteen. He was the son of Philip the Fair and Joanna of Castile and the grandson of the emperor Maximilian and of Ferdinand of Aragon. When his father died in 1506 he inherited all the Burgundian territories (Franche-Comté, Luxembourg,

Brabant, Flanders, Holland, Zeeland, Hainaut and Artois) except the Duchy of Burgundy itself, which had been annexed by France in 1477.

Though Charles was cosmopolitan by blood, he was a Burgundian by birth and upbringing. His favourite author as a child had been Olivier de la Marche, the panegyrist of Charles the Bold, under whom Burgundy had become one of the most powerful states in Europe. As he grew up his heart and mind were bent on one purpose: to rebuild his mutilated inheritance. In 1515, however, the effective head of his government was Guillaume de Croy, lord of Chièvres, who, as a Walloon, wanted peace with France. So Francis was able to neutralise Charles for the time being without difficulty.

Henry VIII of England

The young king of England was anything but shy and unprepossessing. Tall and well-built, he had auburn hair 'combed straight and short in the French fashion, and a round face so very beautiful that it would become a pretty woman'. An observer thought him 'much handsomer than any sovereign in Christendom, a great deal handsomer than the king of France'. Henry was one of the best sportsmen of his day, excelling in archery, wrestling, jousting and tennis. He was also a good linguist, an accomplished musician and a reasonably competent amateur theologian.

Vanity, jealousy and cruelty were Henry VIII's principal faults. In particular he was anxious that his physical attainments should not be surpassed by those of his young rival across the Channel. An Italian envoy wrote:



'His Majesty came into our harbour and addressing me in French, said "Talk with me awhile. The king of France, is he as tall as I am?" I told him there was but little difference. He continued, "Is he as stout?" I said he was not; and he then enquired, "What sort of legs has he?" I replied "Spare". Whereupon he opened the front of his doublet, and placing his hand on his thigh, said, "Look here; and I have also a good calf to my leg".'

Yet, suspicious and envious as he was, Henry was not inclined to pick a quarrel with Francis at this stage. Having already tasted war he was content for the present to enjoy himself and leave policy making in the capable hands of his almoner, Wolsey, who wanted peace in Christendom.

The battle of Marignano

Francis I lost no time completing the military preparations begun by his predecessor. By the summer of 1515 he had assembled an army about forty thousand strong at Lyons. The Swiss, on their part, were keeping a close watch on the main Alpine passes. The king, faced with the choice of either fighting his way through them or bypassing them, chose to do the latter. The French army threaded its way through the difficult Col d'Argentière and suddenly appeared in Piedmont, forcing the Swiss to fall back rapidly towards Milan. Some of the cantons began to negotiate peace terms, but the rest launched a surprise attack on the French camp at Marignano (13 September).

The battle which ensued was one of the fiercest of the Italian Wars. It lasted for the

After inheriting the kingdom of Spain in 1516 Charles of Habsburg was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1519 and became the most powerful ruler in Europe. He travelled widely in his scattered dominions yet never succeeded in welding them into a unified whole.





For more than a generation the emperor Charles V dominated the political and religious life of Europe. In the face of overwhelming odds he tried to maintain Christian unity. Though a Fleming by birth and upbringing, he chose to retire to the monastery of Yuste in Spain.

Left: the emperor as a young man. Anonymous painting. (Musée de Chantilly.) Above: Titian's full-length portrait of Charles V in 1532. (Museo del Prado, Madrid.)

best part of two days and its outcome was decided only at the eleventh hour when the Venetians intervened on the French side. Losses were heavy; the gravediggers counted 16,500 bodies. Marshal Trivulzio, who had fought in eighteen battles, called Marignano 'a battle of giants'.

It certainly marked the end of an epoch. The Swiss ceased to be an independent factor in Italian politics. The myth of their invincibility had been exploded and, by the Eternal Peace of Fribourg (1516), they bound themselves to the service of France. Henceforth their role in European wars was to be simply that of mercenaries.

In Italy the effects of Marignano were important. Francis I became duke of Milan and Massimiliano Sforza retired to France on a pension. Pope Leo X yielded Parma and Piacenza to the king in return for a guarantee that the Medici would remain in Florence. In December 1515 the pope and the king met in Bologna and signed a mutually advantageous concordat.

On 23 January 1516 the balance of power in Europe was badly shaken when Ferdinand of Aragon died. He was succeeded by his grandson, Charles of Burgundy, who had so far tried to keep on good terms with Francis I. His inheritance comprised not only Aragon and Castile, but also Naples and Navarre. As duke of Burgundy, Charles had implicitly recognised the Albret claim to Navarre, but he could hardly be expected to do so now. Equally ominous was the search instituted by Francis in the archives of Provence for evidence supporting his own claim to Naples. For a time the status quo was maintained by the Treaty of Noyon, but, if Erasmus hoped for a new era of peace, the elements of discord were only thinly veiled.

The imperial election

In 1517 the emperor Maximilian fell gravely ill. The Holy Roman Empire was elective, not hereditary. Its ruler was chosen by seven electors: the archbishops of Mainz, Cologne and Trier, the king of Bohemia, the count-palatine, the duke of Saxony and the margrave of Brandenburg. Nothing obliged them to choose a member of the house of Habsburg or even a German. Theoretically, they were supposed to put imperial interests first but in practice their own personal advantage had precedence. Though they solemnly promised to vote 'without the least intrigue, reward, salary or promise of any kind' the majority were willing to take bribes.

As early as 1516 four of the electors invited the French king, Francis I, to stand for the empire. He accepted if only to prevent Maximilian's grandson, Charles, from becoming preponderant in Europe by adding the German territories to his already extensive dominions. Charles was immediately advised to win the electors over by bribery.

At the Diet of Augsburg in 1518 Maximilian persuaded five electors to vote for Charles. But when the emperor died in January 1519 they indicated their readiness to take new bids from the candidates.

Germany soon became a vast auction room. By scattering gold in all directions French agents tried to create the impression that their master had inexhaustible means. In fact, his credit was poor. To scrape enough money together for the electors Francis had to borrow from his subjects, and to sell offices and parts of his demesne. Pope Leo X agreed to support the king as the lesser of two evils, for it was a principle of papal policy to prevent the empire and the Kingdom of Naples from falling into the same hands. As for Henry VIII of England, he secretly offered himself as a third candidate.

Public opinion was very important in the election. Using sermons and broadsheets, Habsburg agents stirred up hatred of everything French. The king of France was also hampered by the fact that the German bankers denied him exchange facilities. While his rival was able to use bills of exchange, Francis had to send ready cash, at his own risk. Once it had to be put into bags and dragged along the bottom of the Rhine by boats.

In June 1519 the electors assembled in Frankfurt and all foreigners were ordered to leave the city. The heat was intense, plague raged in the outskirts and the army of the Swabian League stood menacingly by. On 28 June, after several days of feverish lobbying, Charles was unanimously elected. As the Germans rejoiced wildly at the news, the French agents hastened back to France, narrowly escaping molestation. Though angered by the news of his defeat, Francis took it calmly and even congratulated his victorious rival.

War with the emperor

In 1521 war broke out between Francis I and Charles V. It was provoked by the king of France who wanted to prevent Charles from going to Italy to be crowned emperor by the pope. Not wishing to go to war himself at this stage, Francis made use of Robert de la Marck, lord of Sedan, and Henri d'Albret, king of Navarre. But he misjudged the emperor's ability to strike back. An imperial army under the count of Nassau overran de la Marck's territories and advanced to within a few miles of the French border. In June a French army that had invaded Spanish Navarre was decisively defeated at Esquiro. In Italy, Pope Leo X overthrew his alliance with France and bestowed the investiture of Naples on Charles V.

By the summer Francis was anxious to stop the war and accepted an offer of mediation from Henry VIII. A conference was held at Calais under the presidency of Wolsey. In August the cardinal went to Bruges and signed a secret treaty with the

emperor promising him English help if the war did not end by November. The Calais conference soon became a farce. Even the usual diplomatic civilities were ignored. When the French chancellor, Duprat, wagered his head if collusion between his master and de la Marck could be proved, his imperial counterpart, Gattinara, retorted that he would rather have a pig's head, which would be better to eat.

Meanwhile the war continued. For three weeks Nassau besieged Mézières which Bayard defended heroically. Eventually the imperialists retreated leaving a trail of destruction behind them. In the south, the French captured Fuenterrabia, the key to Spain, and in Italy they relieved Parma. In November, the Calais conference ended unsuccessfully. Wolsey returned home complaining that he was 'sore tempestyd in mind by the ontowardness of the chauncelers and oratours on every side'. The improvement in Francis's fortunes proved short lived. The expulsion of the French from Milan in November was quickly followed by the capitulation of Tournai in the north.

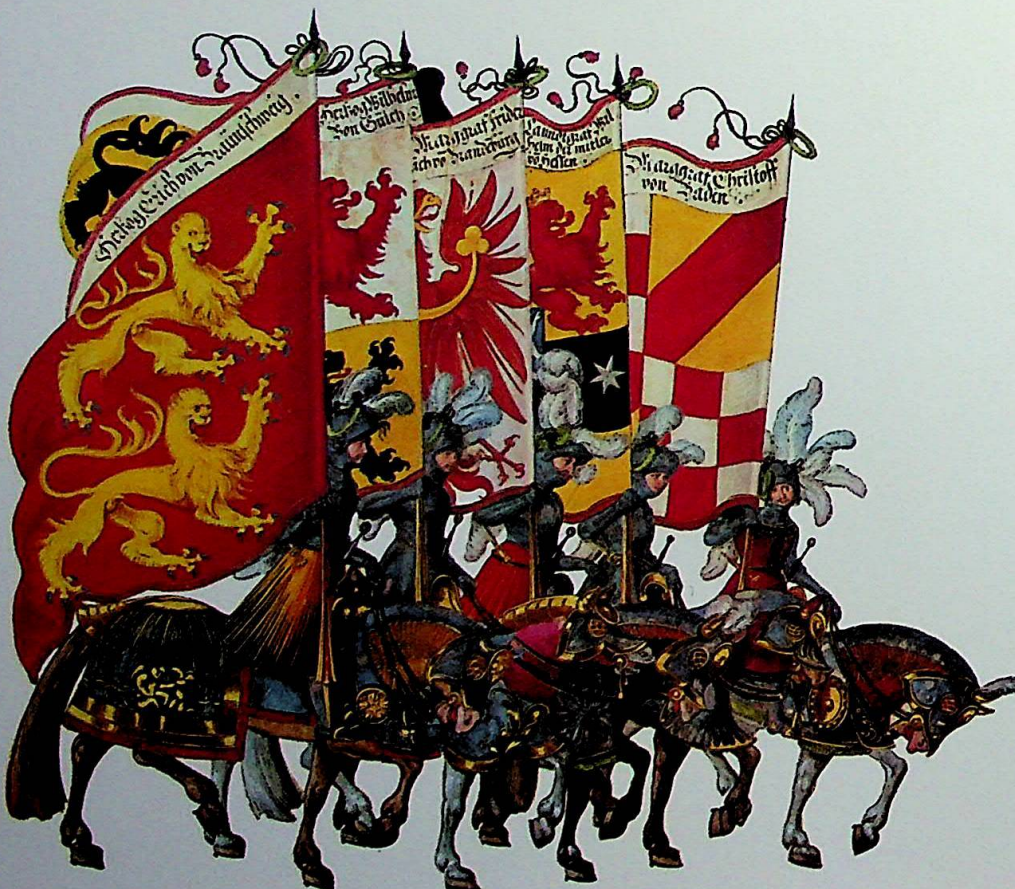
Following the death of Leo X in December 1521, Adrian of Utrecht, Charles V's old tutor and regent in Spain, was elected pope. This caused much resentment in France, but Adrian VI turned out to be a humble and devout man who approached his duties in a

truly Christian spirit. He hoped to pacify Christendom so that its princes might unite against the Turks.

In April 1522 the French suffered a major setback in Italy when Marshal Lautrec was defeated at La Bicocca near Milan. England chose this moment to declare war on France and in September an expeditionary force under the earl of Surrey invaded Picardy. Meanwhile the Turkish sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent, captured Rhodes which the knights of St. John of Jerusalem had held since 1309. On learning of this the pope exclaimed 'Alas, for Christendom! I should have died happy if I had united the Christian princes to withstand our enemy'. As Francis I prepared to cross the Alps again, Adrian joined the emperor and his allies in a league for the defence of Italy.

Below: the banners of the emperor Maximilian's army. His death in January 1519 was followed by a contested election to the Holy Roman Empire. It was won by his grandson, Charles, who already ruled the Netherlands and Spain.

Right: details from The Triumph of Maximilian I. (Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.)







Above: fear of the power of the new emperor, Charles V, caused Francis I to seek the friendship of Henry VIII. In June 1520 they met at the Field of Cloth of Gold, half way between Guines and Ardres, near Calais. The meeting which lasted a fortnight failed to achieve any lasting amity between the two kings. Detail from an anonymous painting showing the French and English tents. (Musée de Versailles.) The original is at Hampton Court.

Left: equestrian armour of Francis I by Jorg Seusenhoffer of Innsbruck. (Musée de l'Armée, Paris.)



The treason of Charles of Bourbon

One of the most dramatic events of the century was the treason of Charles, duke of Bourbon and constable of France, the last of the great French feudal lords. His territories formed a large and compact block in central France. He had his own court and administration and, like the king, dispensed justice, levied taxes, summoned the estates and raised troops. His castle at Moulins was one of the largest in France and was surrounded by a park renowned for its wild animals and exotic birds.

In 1515 Charles of Bourbon was a handsome young man with a distinguished war record. As constable of France he was responsible for military administration in peacetime, and entitled by custom, if not by right, to command the vanguard under the king in wartime. The first clear sign of discord between him and the king occurred in October 1521 when he was not given command of the vanguard during the campaign in northern France. The principal

cause of the quarrel was the death of Bourbon's wife, Suzanne, who had left a considerable amount of property, to which the king and his mother laid claim. The duke had also been left childless and needed to remarry so as to ensure the continuity of his line.

Angered by the king's efforts to cheat him of his inheritance, Bourbon entered into secret negotiations with the emperor. In July he signed a treaty promising to lead a rebellion in return for the hand of one of Charles V's sisters. His plan was to wait until Francis had gone to Italy with his army before revealing himself. But the plot was soon discovered. Francis called on the duke at Moulins and offered to settle the question of his inheritance to his satisfaction if only he would accompany him to Italy. Bourbon agreed to do so but tried to gain time by feigning illness. While the king proceeded to Lyons the duke signed a secret treaty with Henry VIII along the same lines as his agreement with the emperor. He refused, however, to recognise Henry as king of France.

Meanwhile Francis I's patience ran out. He ordered the arrest of the duke's chief

accomplices and deferred his own journey to Italy. Finding himself almost trapped, Bourbon fled into the mountains of Auvergne and eventually made his way to imperial territory while the allies tried unsuccessfully to invade France from three directions. Although Bourbon's revolt had failed ignominiously, it had obliged the king of France to alter his plans. Admiral Bonivet, who commanded the French invasion of Italy instead of the king, was a poor general. He spent the exceptionally severe winter trying to blockade Milan and in the spring was obliged to retreat. In the course of this operation Bayard, the noblest captain of his day, was fatally wounded. Legend has it that Bourbon came to see him as he lay dying beneath a tree. 'Monsieur', said Bayard, 'there is no need to pity me for I die as an honourable man, whereas I pity you who are serving against your prince and your oath'.

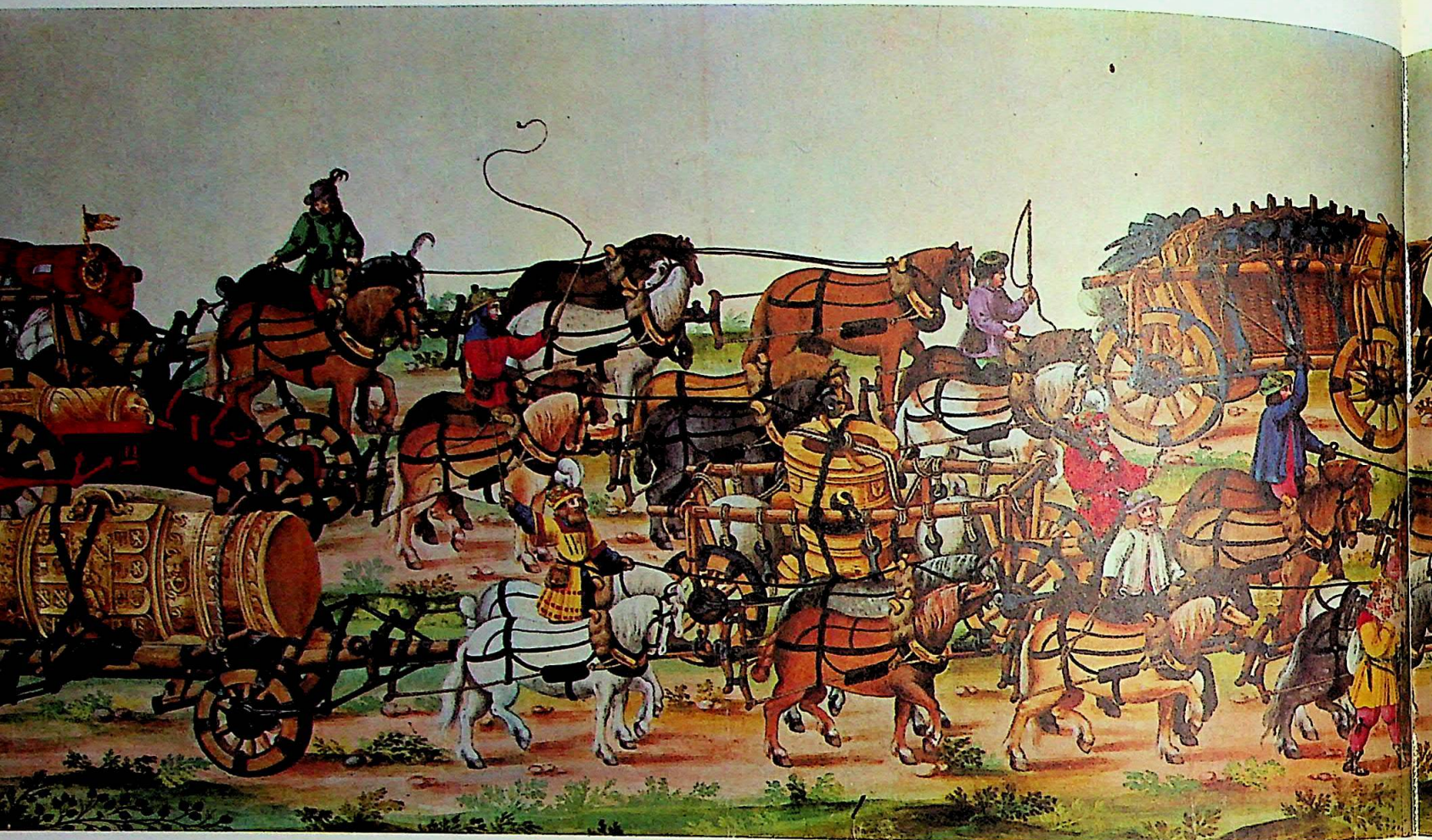
In July 1524 the imperial army, now commanded by Bourbon, followed up its victory in Italy by invading Provence. The duke hoped that his former vassals in central France would rally to his standard and help him on his way to Lyons and Paris, but they remained quiet. The duke was also let down by his allies and Marseilles proved an insuperable obstacle. While the garrison bravely endured heavy bombardments, Francis I rebuilt an army and marched to Avignon. Seeing that his communications were threatened, Bourbon had to beat a hasty retreat along the coast and the king reoccupied Provence.

The battle of Pavia

Bourbon's retreat from Provence enabled Francis to put into effect his long-deferred plan of leading another invasion of Italy himself. The weather was fine so that he was able to cross the Alps in a few days. As the imperial army had not yet had time to reorganise itself he was able to recapture Milan without meeting any resistance. If he had marched on to Lodi immediately he might have won the war. Instead, he decided to besiege Pavia, the second largest city of the duchy.

Pavia was surrounded by a wall except on its southern side where the river Ticino formed a natural barrier. The French succeeded in breaching the wall with their artillery but failed to take the city by storm. They then hit upon the ingenious idea of diverting the Ticino so as to permit an assault from the south, but the November floods swept away a dam which they had built and the plan was dropped.

The siege degenerated into a blockade punctuated by skirmishes and bombardments. While the king of France unwisely reduced the strength of his army by sending ten thousand men to conquer Naples, innumerable tradesmen, vagabonds and prostitutes attached themselves to his camp.



The winter was so severe that even the nobles sought warmth in the king's kitchen. Some of the French commanders wanted to postpone operations till the spring but Francis refused, saying that no king of France had ever besieged a town without taking it.

In January 1525 an imperial army marched from Lodi to relieve Pavia. For three weeks the two armies faced each other without making a move. But an acute shortage of supplies obliged the imperialists to take the offensive. They decided to attack the park of Mirabello which the French had omitted to fortify as it was already enclosed by a wall.

On 23 February a team of sappers, using only rams and picks, breached the wall in three places and the imperial troops poured into the park, taking the French completely by surprise. Francis managed to rally his cavalry and charged through the enemy centre but his infantry lagged behind and suffered heavy losses. Meanwhile the Pavia garrison came into the open, obliging the French to fight on two fronts. Francis tried desperately to rally his men but, after his horse had been killed under him, he was surrounded and captured.

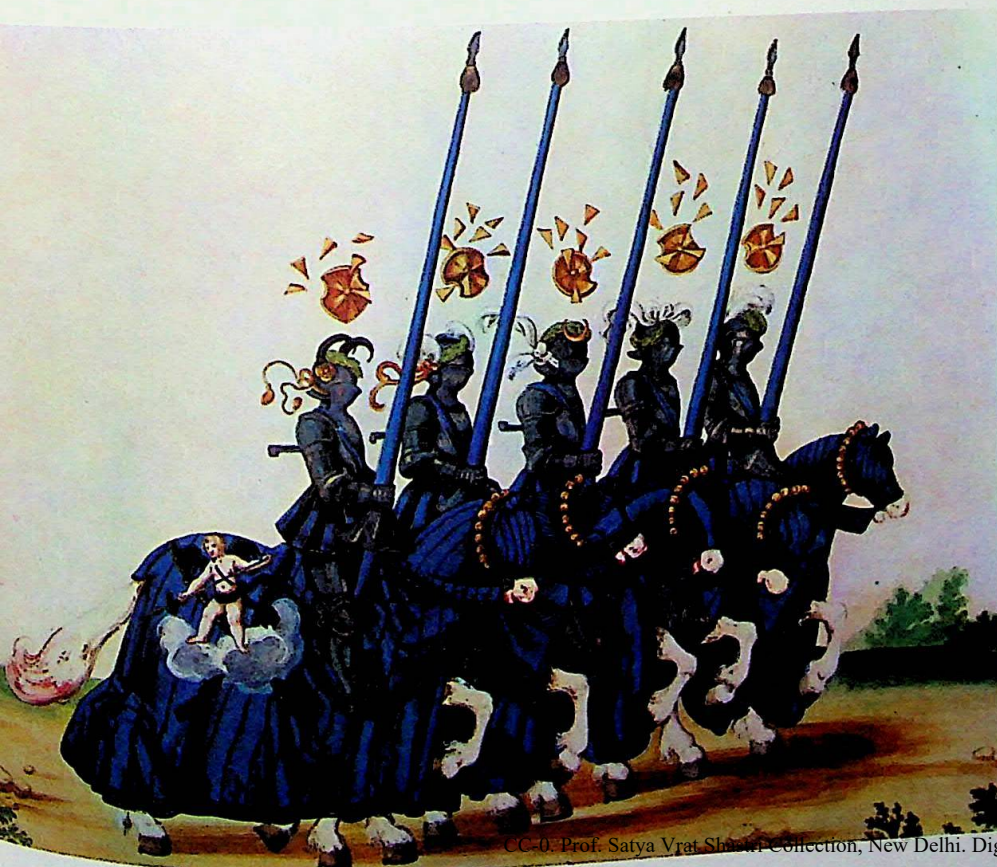
At the end of the battle some eight thousand Frenchmen lay dead on the field, including Admiral Bonnivet and other close



During the Italian Wars huge guns were abandoned in favour of a lighter artillery which could keep up with armies on the march. Mobility and precision of fire were helped by improved gun carriages and the invention of the trunnion.

Top and above: artillery on the move and in action.

Right: five men-at-arms. Details from The Triumph of Maximilian I. (Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.)



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The captivity of Francis I

For a long time the king of France expected to be released on generous terms, but the emperor was not prepared to be magnanimous at the expense of his own political interest. In March he was urged by his ally, Henry VIII, to join him in the conquest and dismemberment of France. The king of England argued that there had never been so good an opportunity 'utterly to extinct the regiment of the French king and his line, or any other Frenchman, from the crown of France'. Without waiting for Charles' reply, Henry asked his subjects for an 'Amicable Grant' and prepared to invade France.

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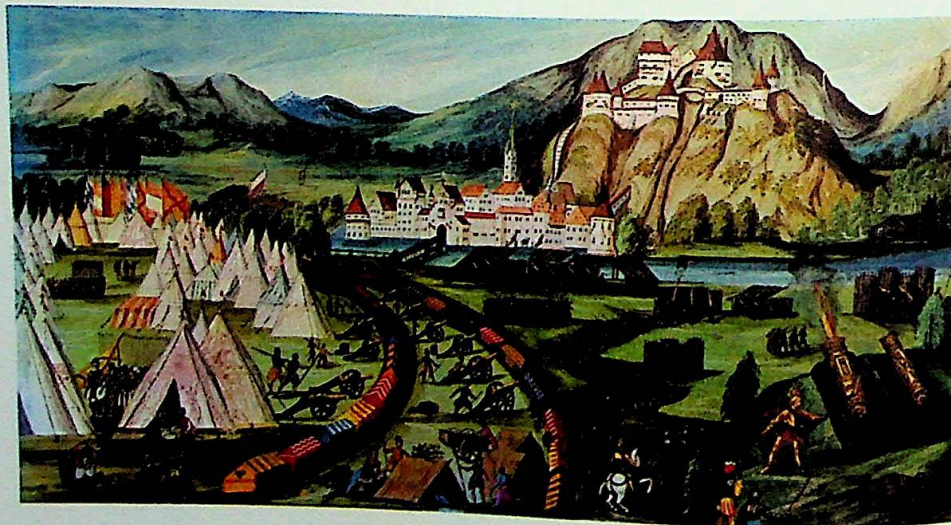


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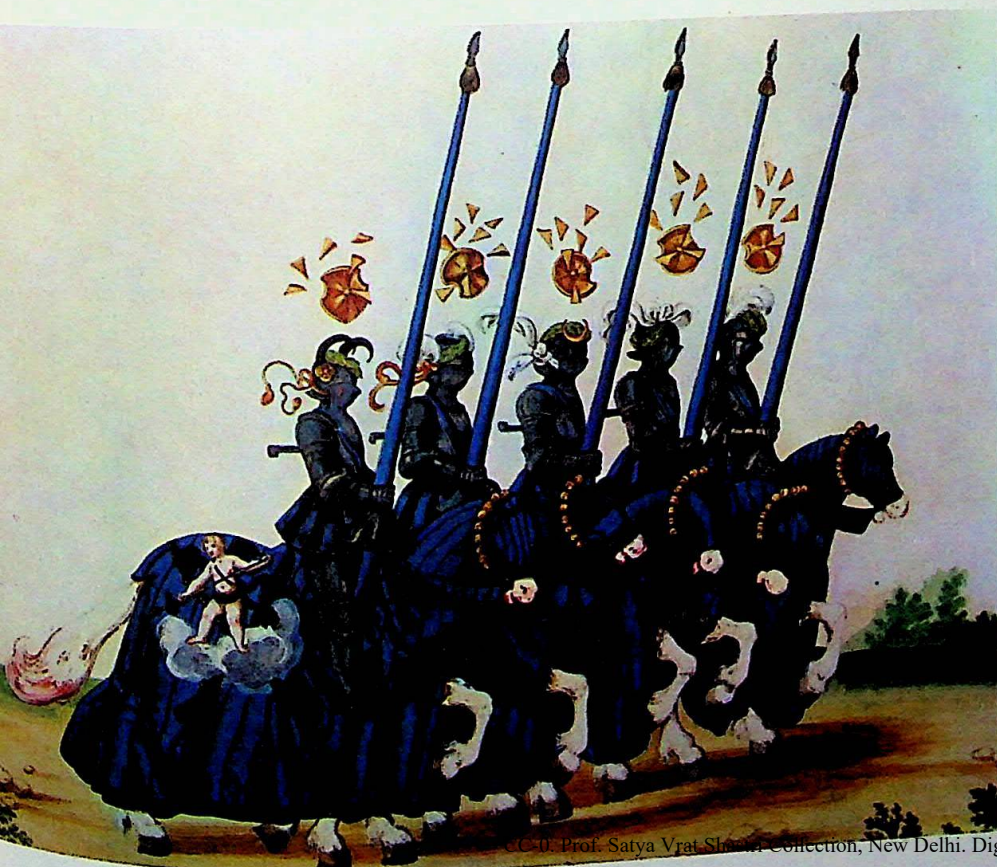
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many problems: in Italy his army was unpaid and mutinous, in Germany the Peasants' War had broken out, and in the east the Turkish threat remained. His chancellor, Gattinara, who believed that a continuation of the war would only benefit England, advised him to show 'the magnanimity of the lion and the mercy of God the Father'. Charles consequently opened negotiations with Francis.

Although the emperor expressed generous sentiments, his peace terms were harsh. Francis was to cede Burgundy and all the other territories that Charles the Bold had held at his death; Bourbon was to be reinstated and given Provence as an independent kingdom; and Henry VIII's French claims were to be satisfied. The king of France rejected these terms at the end of April. He was prepared to make substantial concessions but refused to cede an inch of

In the autumn of 1524 Francis I again invaded Italy hoping to repeat his earlier success at Marignano.

Below: detail from his tomb at the abbey of Saint-Denis. After besieging Pavia for four months he was defeated and captured on 24 February 1525.

Far right: the battle of Pavia. School of Joachim Patenier 1525. (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.)

Centre: a member of Francis I's guard, wearing the king's emblem, the salamander. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)



French territory. Early in May the imperial authorities decided to move him to Naples, but he persuaded the viceroy, Lannoy, to take him to Spain instead. Meanwhile, his mother, Louise of Savoy, who ruled France in his absence, sent an appeal for help to the Turkish sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent, and in August 1525 signed the Peace of Moore with England.

The Spanish captivity of the French king lasted nearly nine months. His journey from Valencia to Madrid was like a royal progress: he was lavishly entertained by the duke of Infantando at Guadalajara and visited the famous university of Alcalá de Henares. Francis had built up great hopes on a personal meeting with the emperor, but the latter showed no eagerness to meet him. Only when Francis fell seriously ill did Charles hasten to his bedside.

When Margaret of Angoulême visited Spain to offer a ransom for her brother,

Charles V insisted on the surrender of Burgundy. In the end Francis saw that he would never regain his freedom unless he gave way. By the Treaty of Madrid he abandoned the duchy and all his Italian claims and agreed to hand over his two sons as hostages pending fulfilment of the treaty.

As soon as he had been released, however, Francis declared that he was not bound to keep promises extorted from him under duress. His repudiation of the Treaty of Madrid was immediately followed by the formation of a new coalition against the emperor, called the Holy League of Cognac. It comprised France, the papacy, Venice, Florence and the Milan of Francesco Sforza. The imperialists in Italy, who were commanded by Bourbon, were vulnerable, being penniless, numerically weak and hated by the population. Yet they were able to hold their own, for the duke of Urbino, who commanded the league's army, was



excessively cautious and Francis failed to send the military help expected of him. As a result Sforza, who had been besieged in Milan castle, had to capitulate and Bourbon's army was able to leave the Lombard plain.

The sack of Rome

As the imperial army, now reinforced by a powerful contingent of German mercenaries, marched on Rome, Pope Clement VII tried desperately to avert a disaster. He signed a truce with the emperor, but Bourbon's men refused to be deflected from their course. They were cold, hungry and short of money; only the expectation of booty kept them together. Clement offered to buy them off, but he could not meet their exorbitant demands. On the 6 May 1527 they launched an assault on the virtually defenceless city.

Among the first to fall was the duke of

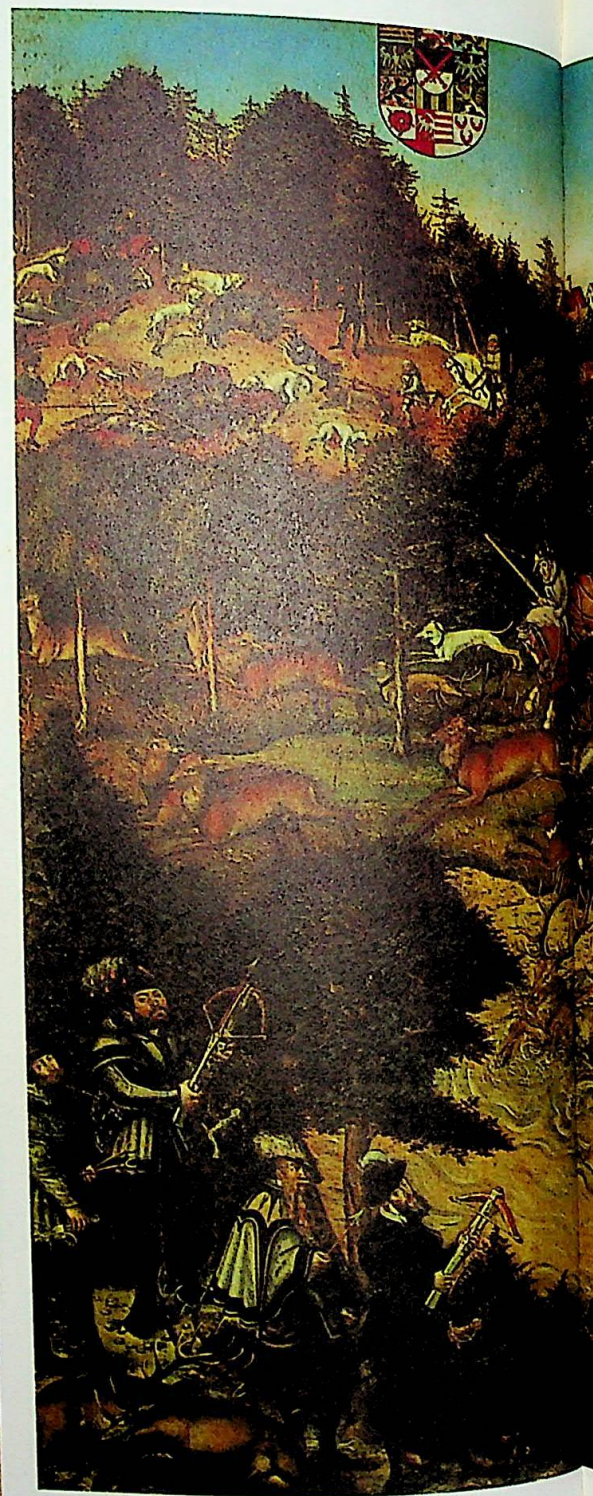
Bourbon, who was struck by a cannon ball or bullet as he scaled the city's ramparts. His death had the effect of inflaming his already wild and uncontrollable men. They broke into the city and swept across it like a mountain torrent in flood, killing, burning, and looting. The pope, some cardinals and about three thousand people took refuge in the castle of Sant 'Angelo. The sack continued for more than a week. Indescribable atrocities were committed. People were tortured for money without respect for age, sex or status. The Lutheran troops attacked anything ecclesiastical with special relish. 'From every side', wrote an eye-witness, 'came cries, the clash of arms, the shrieks of women and children, the crackling of flames, the crash of falling roofs'.

It is impossible to be precise about the number of people who died in the sack of Rome. In two districts alone 2,000 bodies were cast into the Tiber and 9,800 buried. The booty of the soldiers was incalculable; Clement VII estimated the damage at ten million gold ducats. The Sistine Chapel was

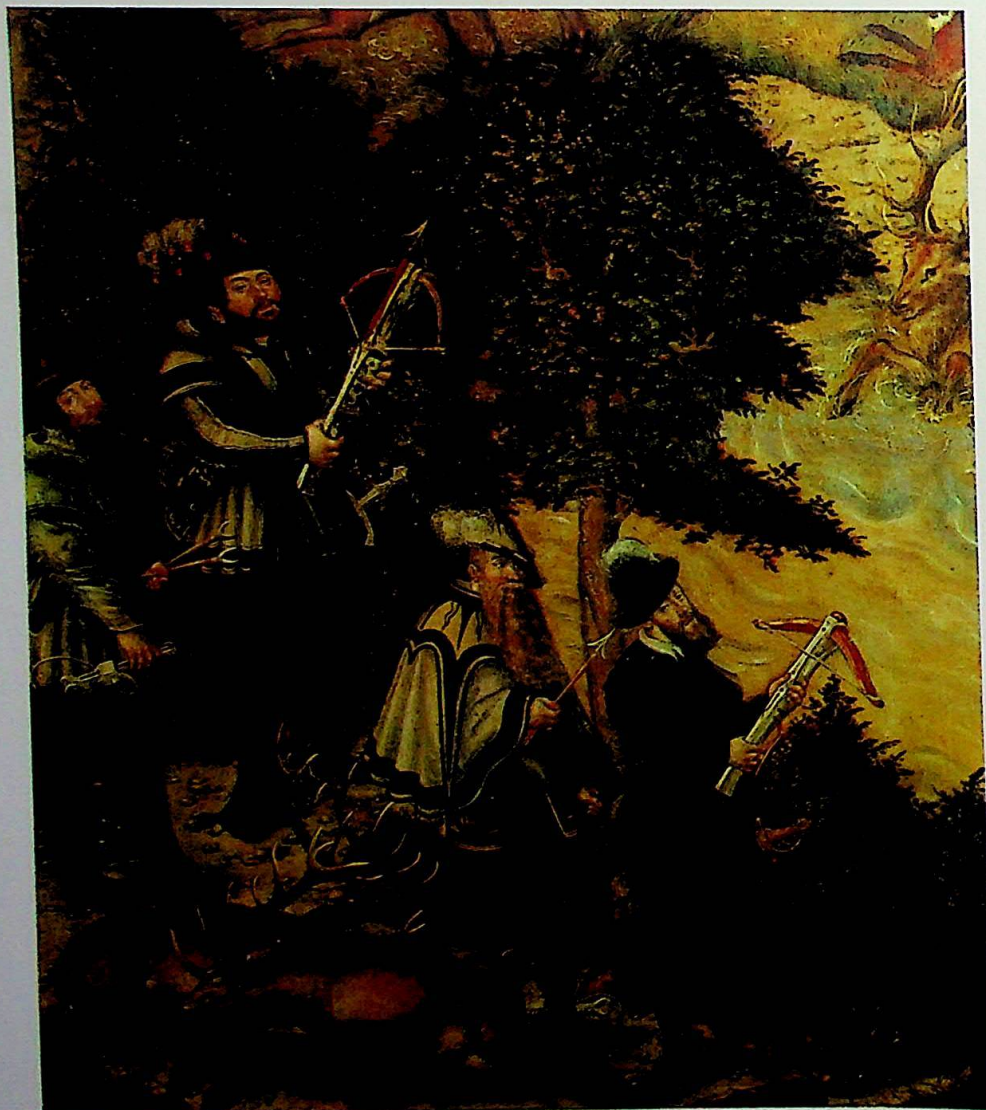
used as stables and the Vatican Library was saved only because Philibert, prince of Orange, who replaced Bourbon, had his headquarters in the palace.

A month after the sack a Spaniard described the Holy City as follows:

'No bells ring, no churches are open, no masses are said, Sundays and feastdays have ceased. The rich shops of the merchants are turned into stables, the most splendid palaces are stripped bare; many houses are burnt to the ground; in others the doors and windows are broken and carried away; the streets are changed into dunghills. The stench of dead bodies is terrible; men and beasts have a common grave and in the churches I have seen corpses that dogs have gnawn'. In the public places tables are set close together at which piles of ducats are gambled for. The air rings with blasphemies fit to make good men, if such there be, wish that they were deaf. I know nothing wherewith I can compare it, except it be the destruction of Jerusalem. . . .'



Above and left: hunting was the principal pastime of sixteenth-century princes. In this painting of a stag-hunt held at Torgau in Saxony in 1544, the emperor Charles V (in plain black) can be seen with his host, the obese John Frederick. Painting attributed to Lucas Cranach the Elder. (Museo del Prado, Madrid.)





The Peace of the Ladies

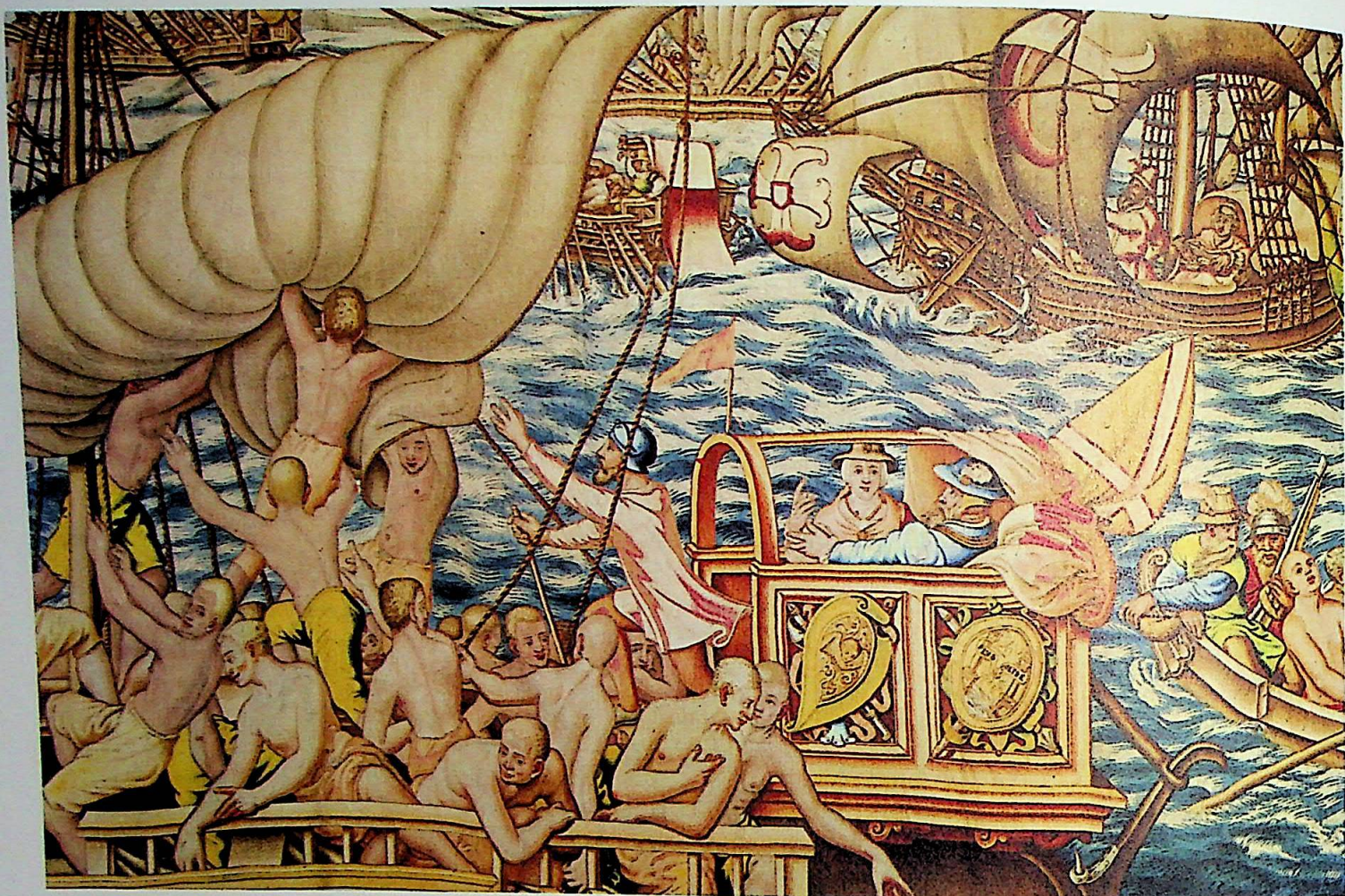
The sack of Rome shook Francis I out of his lethargy and precipitated another French invasion of Italy, this time under Marshal Lautrec. He recaptured Lombardy, except Milan, and early in 1528 laid siege to Naples. The city was saved by the defection to the imperial side of the Genoese admiral, Andrea Doria, and by an epidemic of typhus or cholera which carried off Lautrec and thousands of his men. In June 1529 another French army, under the count of Saint Pol,

was defeated at Landriano in north Italy.

These events convinced the pope that he had nothing to gain by remaining neutral. 'I have quite made up my mind', he declared, 'to become an imperialist, and to live and die as such.' Clement VII wanted Charles V to help restore the Medici to power in Florence. On 29 June, therefore, his nuncio signed the Treaty of Barcelona with the emperor. In return for Charles' military assistance, the pope promised to crown him emperor and to absolve all who had taken part in the sack of Rome. The pope's

nephew, Alessandro de' Medici, married the emperor's illegitimate daughter, Margaret.

By now Francis I also wished for a respite. A meeting was arranged at Cambrai between his mother, Louise of Savoy, and the emperor's aunt, Margaret of Austria, who ruled the Netherlands. Despite the many differences which existed between the two sides, a settlement was reached known as the Peace of Cambrai or Peace of the Ladies on 3 August. In some respects this was an imperial triumph: Francis gave up some border towns, his Italian claims and his



suzerainty over Artois and Flanders. Yet he had achieved two important objectives of his policy since 1526: he kept Burgundy and secured the release of his sons for a ransom. The peace was sealed by his marriage with the emperor's sister, Eleanor of Portugal.

The Turkish threat to Christendom

In July 1529 Charles V sailed from Barcelona to Genoa. His purpose was to pacify Italy in order to attend to more pressing problems elsewhere. In Germany, the Lutheran heresy was rapidly gaining ground and in central Europe, the Ottoman Turks were once again on the move.

Turkish expansionism was one of the principal determining factors in European politics. At the accession of the sultan, Süleyman the Magnificent, in 1520 his empire extended across Asia Minor, the Balkans and North Africa. It comprised territories that were directly administered, tributary lands and vassal states. The non-Muslim inhabitants were not persecuted; they were allowed to keep their institutions as long as they paid taxes. In fact there was more religious toleration under the sign of the crescent than that of the cross.

At the head of the empire was the sultan,

whose office was hereditary, though primogeniture (the principle that the eldest male heir should succeed) did not become established till 1617. The son who first seized the capital and its treasure on his father's death gained the throne and he was entitled to kill off his brothers. Although the sultan was a despot his authority was limited by the Sacred Law based on the Koran, which was regarded as divine, by the legislation and institutions of his ancestors and by the immensity of his dominions. He ruled through two institutions: the Ottoman Ruling Institution and the Muslim Institution which were roughly equivalent to state and Church. The personnel of the former was made up of ex-Christian slaves, that of the latter of Muslim freemen.

Slavery was of fundamental importance in the Ottoman Empire; it carried no social stigma. Every member of the state, including the grand vizir, was a slave, who enjoyed the sultan's protection and exemption from taxes. These privileges, however, were not hereditary; they died with the slave. The sultan had power over the life and property of every slave. The slaves, who were all non-Muslim by birth, were recruited by capture, purchase, gift or tribute. Every four years officials were sent to the tributary provinces to choose boys between the ages of twelve

and twenty. However, despite the iniquity of the system, it gave boys of humble birth a unique opportunity of rising in the world. All slaves had to become Muslims. They were converted not forcibly, but through education and isolation from Christianity.

Every year the male slaves were divided into two groups. Those with most intellectual aptitude (the *pages*) were trained in war, handicraft, reading and writing at three colleges attached to the sultan's palaces. The less intellectually able (the *ajem-oghlan*s) were trained in two stages: on country estates as farm labourers and at Constantinople as sailors, gardeners, shipbuilders and the like. The female slaves were brought up

Turkish expansion westward was one of Charles V's many problems. While his brother, Ferdinand, tried to check it in central Europe, the emperor led a successful expedition against Tunis in 1535.

Above: detail from a series of Brussels tapestries by Pannemaker depicting the conquest of Tunis. (Alcázar, Seville.)

Right: an imperial foot soldier. Engraving. (Museo del Ejército, Madrid.)

Far right: armour and shield of a member of Charles V's army. (Real Armería, Madrid.)



in the harem. At twenty-five the pages were appointed either governors of towns or spahis of the Porte, or cavalry, the ajem-oghlan became janissaries and the female slaves were married off to the spahis.

The Ottoman system was 'born of war and organised for conquest'. The personnel of the army and of the government were one and the same: they governed in peace and fought in war. The army comprised the janissaries or infantry, who were notoriously troublesome, and the spahis or crack cavalry. Altogether the army numbered between 200,000 and 300,000 men. Its commander-in-chief was the sultan. In war-time it fought indivisibly and, therefore, could only operate on one front at a time. Thus, in 1533 and 1547 the Turks had to make peace with the Habsburgs so as to fight the Persians.

The main difference between the Ottoman court and that of western rulers was the seclusion of women. The harem, which was made up of the sultan's mother, wives, children and slaves, was guarded by black eunuchs under an official called the 'general of the girls'. The sultan was assisted by a council (divan) and a team of ministers headed by the grand vizier. His revenues were larger than those of any western ruler. The function of the Muslim Institution with its staff of Muslim-born lawyers and judges was to ensure that Muslim law and doctrine were being observed.

Since the fourteenth century the Ottomans had been expanding steadily westward. Under Mehmed II they had captured Constantinople, penetrated far into the Balkans and expelled the Venetians from Euboea; under Selim 'the Terrible' (1512-20) they had conquered Syria, Palestine and Egypt.

Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent

The West heaved a sigh of relief when Selim the Terrible died. His twenty-six-year-old son, Süleyman, was reputed to be 'a gentle lamb', but he soon showed himself no less bellicose than his predecessors. In 1521 he captured Belgrade and in 1522 attacked Rhodes. The Knights of St John, who held the island, had long harassed Muslim trade and plundered ships taking pilgrims to Mecca. The siege lasted 145 days and the Turks lost heavily in men and material, but eventually the garrison capitulated.

For three years Süleyman was content to rest on his laurels, but in 1526 he again marched on Hungary at the head of an enormous army. The Hungarians were hopelessly divided between a 'court' party, led by the young king, Louis II, and a 'national' party, led by John Zápolyai, prince of Transylvania. On 29 August they came up against the Turks on the plain of Mohacs. With insane overconfidence their cavalry charged into the jaws of the sultan's

Although suffering from gout Charles V followed up his capture of La Goletta by marching on Tunis. He is seen (below) proudly leading his cavalry. This and other details of the campaign shown here are taken from the series of contemporary tapestries called The Conquest of Tunis which the emperor himself commissioned. (Alcazar, Seville.)





guns only to be shattered to pieces. King Louis and most of his nobles were left dead on the field. Ten days later the victors entered Buda.

Because of Mohacs the defence of Christendom devolved on the Habsburgs, more especially on Charles V's brother, Ferdinand, who now became king of Bohemia and of Hungary. His rival, Zápolyai, turned to the sultan, who recognised him as vassal and king. When Ferdinand called on Süleyman to withdraw from some of the fortresses he had conquered, the sultan declared that he would come to Vienna to satisfy him.

A major offensive on the Danube was a severe test of Ottoman military resourcefulness. Although the campaign season lasted from mid-April to the end of October, the sultan's army could not expect to cross the Sava before July. Rivers had to be spanned by pontoon bridges, roads had to be made over difficult ground, and bad weather frequently impeded progress. Some guns and munitions were carried by boats on the Danube, but most had to be loaded on



waggons, carts or beasts of burden. Abundant food was necessary as the retreat might lie through devastated areas.

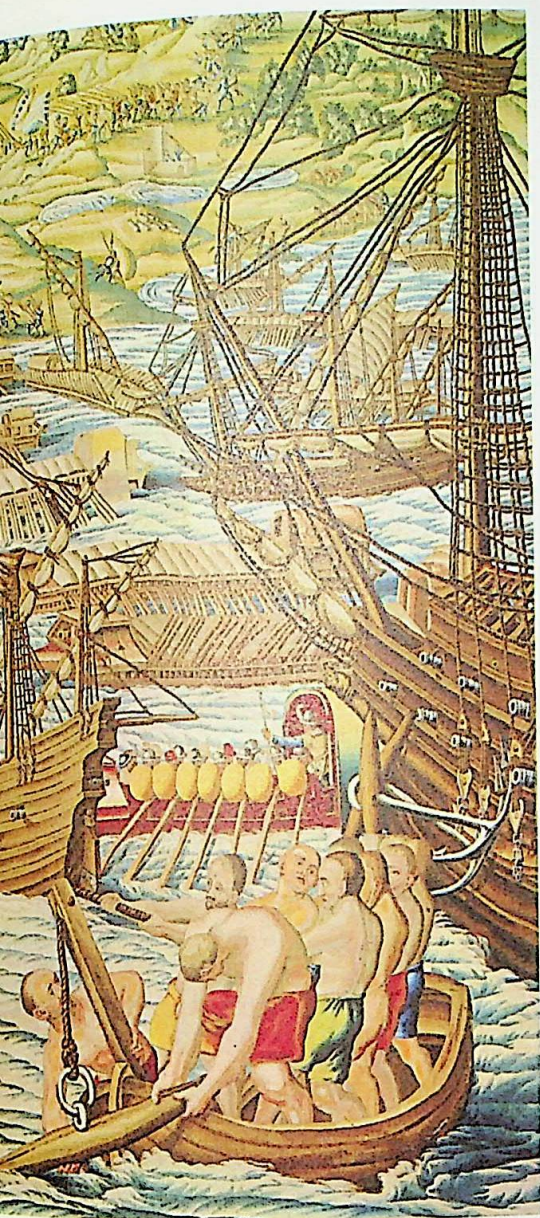
These difficulties and the premature onset of winter explain why Süleyman failed to capture Vienna in 1529. Incessant rain and flooded rivers prevented him reaching the city before September. Thus Ferdinand had enough time to give it a strong garrison. The Turks had to succeed quickly as their food was running low, but all their assaults were repulsed, so on 14 October Süleyman gave the order to retreat. In 1532 he again marched against the Habsburgs, but was held up by the heroic resistance of the small town of Güns. Having lost three precious weeks, he gave up his plan, signed a truce with Ferdinand, and became involved in a war with the Persians.

Because of the Turkish threat Charles V was unable to visit Rome in 1529. He asked Clement VII to meet him at Bologna instead. In the course of the four months which they spent together a mutually satisfactory settlement of the Italian situation was reached. Francesco Sforza was restored to power in Milan, Venice promised to give back Ravenna and Cervia to the pope, and an imperial army under the prince of Orange was sent to besiege Florence in aid of the Medici. In February 1530 Charles V received the crowns of Lombardy and of the Holy Roman Empire amidst all the traditional pomp and ceremony. He then moved on to Germany to preside over the doctrinal bickerings of the Diet of Augsburg.

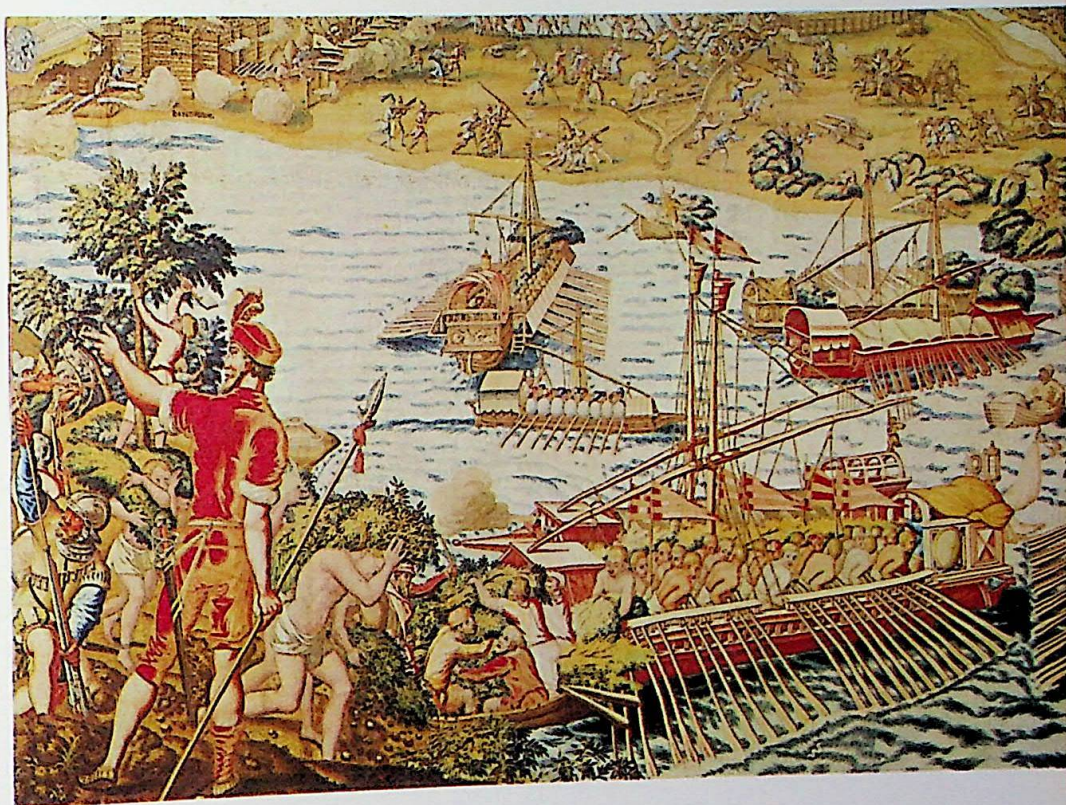
Charles V and the German Lutherans

Although the emperor stood by the pope and his own Edict of Worms, he was anxious to achieve a religious settlement in Germany and treated the Lutherans with courtesy. At





The conquest of Tunis in 1535 began with the siege of La Goletta, a fortress guarding the narrow entrance to the Bay of Tunis. It lasted nearly three weeks and Charles V's troops suffered acutely from the heat and water shortage. More than eighty enemy galleys fell into the emperor's hands following the capitulation of the fortress on 14 July. Details from the series of tapestries *The Conquest of Tunis*. (Alcázar, Seville.)



his invitation they drew up a confession of faith which was read on the Diet on 25 June. It was mainly Melancthon's work and was so remarkably conciliatory that it was described by the bishop of Augsburg as 'the pure truth'. Yet the Catholic theologians would have nothing to do with it. A committee of theologians from both sides failed to break the deadlock. In September, Charles issued a recess in which he promised a General Council within a year and forbade Lutheran innovations in the meantime. The Lutherans rejected the recess and in December formed a defensive alliance, called the Schmalkaldic League.

In 1532, however, a temporary political unity was achieved when the Turks again threatened Christendom. A truce was signed at Nuremberg which enabled Charles to raise a powerful army. After the Turkish retreat he returned to Bologna where he spent the winter trying in vain to persuade Clement VII to call a General Council. In

April he returned to Spain.

In the emperor's absence the Lutheran princes again looked to France for support. Early in 1534 Philip of Hesse met Francis I secretly at Bar-le-Duc and obtained a subsidy which he used to restore Duke Ulrich of Württemberg, who had been dispossessed by the Habsburgs in 1520. Charles V was warned that Germany was full of French agents. In 1535 the Schmalkaldic League was renewed for another ten years. Yet the German princes were not yet prepared to ally with Francis against Charles, being still afraid of the Turkish menace and distrustful of the French king because of his persecution of Protestants in his own country.

The conquest of Tunis

The struggle between Christendom and the Infidel was fought not only in the Danube valley but also in the Mediterranean. Even before the fall of Rhodes pirates operating

Heanticher lan schiff krieg auf Meer und Flüssen vollendet



from North African ports had harassed shipping and terrorised the coastal villages of Spain and Italy. The most dreaded of them was Khair-ad-Din Barberossa, who controlled Algiers as a vassal of the Turkish sultan. In 1532 he was appointed grand admiral of the Ottoman fleet and in 1534 he ravaged the coasts of south Italy with more than a hundred ships and expelled Muley Hasan, Charles V's ally, from Tunis.

The emperor could not allow the Turks to dominate the central Mediterranean and to threaten his kingdoms of Sicily and Naples. In 1535, therefore, he assembled a large fleet at Barcelona and an army at Cagliari in Sardinia. Then, on 10 June, the entire expedition sailed for Africa.

Its first objective was the fortress of La Goletta, guarding the narrow entrance to the Bay of Tunis. Although Charles was suffering acutely from gout, nothing would keep him from the front lines. The siege lasted nearly three weeks and the emperor's men suffered severely from the intense heat and shortage of water, but on 14 July they launched an assault from several directions and the defenders fled. Many French guns with the fleur-de-lis embossed on their barrels were among the rich booty found in

the fortress and Barberossa's fleet of eighty-two galleys was captured in the harbour. Charles then seized Tunis while Barberossa made his escape to Algiers.

The conquest of Tunis was undoubtedly Charles V's greatest personal triumph. The whole world marvelled at his might. When Charles visited Sicily in the autumn of 1535 his triumph seemed complete. As he rode beneath magnificent arches, trophies and inscriptions, the crowds shouted 'Long live our victorious emperor, father of the fatherland, conqueror of Africa, peace-maker of Italy!'

The Castilian empire in the New World

By 1535 Charles V was also master of the New World. After Darien had been settled, expeditions were sent by the governor of Cuba to explore the Gulf of Mexico. They returned with reports of the rich and powerful Aztec state. The conquest of Mexico by Hernando Cortes and 600 volunteers began in 1519. Within a remarkably short time they established their ascendancy and set about replacing the Aztec monarchy and religion by Spanish rule and institutions. In

1530 Francisco Pizarro with only 180 men and 27 horses set off to conquer Peru. By 1550 all the chief centres of settled population in tropical America were in Spanish hands.

The conquistadors had gone to America at their own expense and looked forward to living on slave labour, but the Spanish government did not intend a new feudalism to take root overseas, while the Church was concerned that the natives should be treated fairly. An influential advocate of their rights was the Dominican friar, Bartolomé de Las Casas. By about 1550 an official policy had emerged. The Indies were treated as dependencies of the crown of Castile, administered through a distinct royal council. The Indians were free men and direct subjects of the crown.

The Castilians (the Aragonese were deliberately excluded) in the New World comprised soldiers, missionaries and administrators. The good behaviour of the soldiers had to be bought with grants of land (*encomiendas*) and minor salaried offices. They expressed themselves through town councils which were really oligarchies exercising wide administrative powers. Alongside the soldiers were friars from the



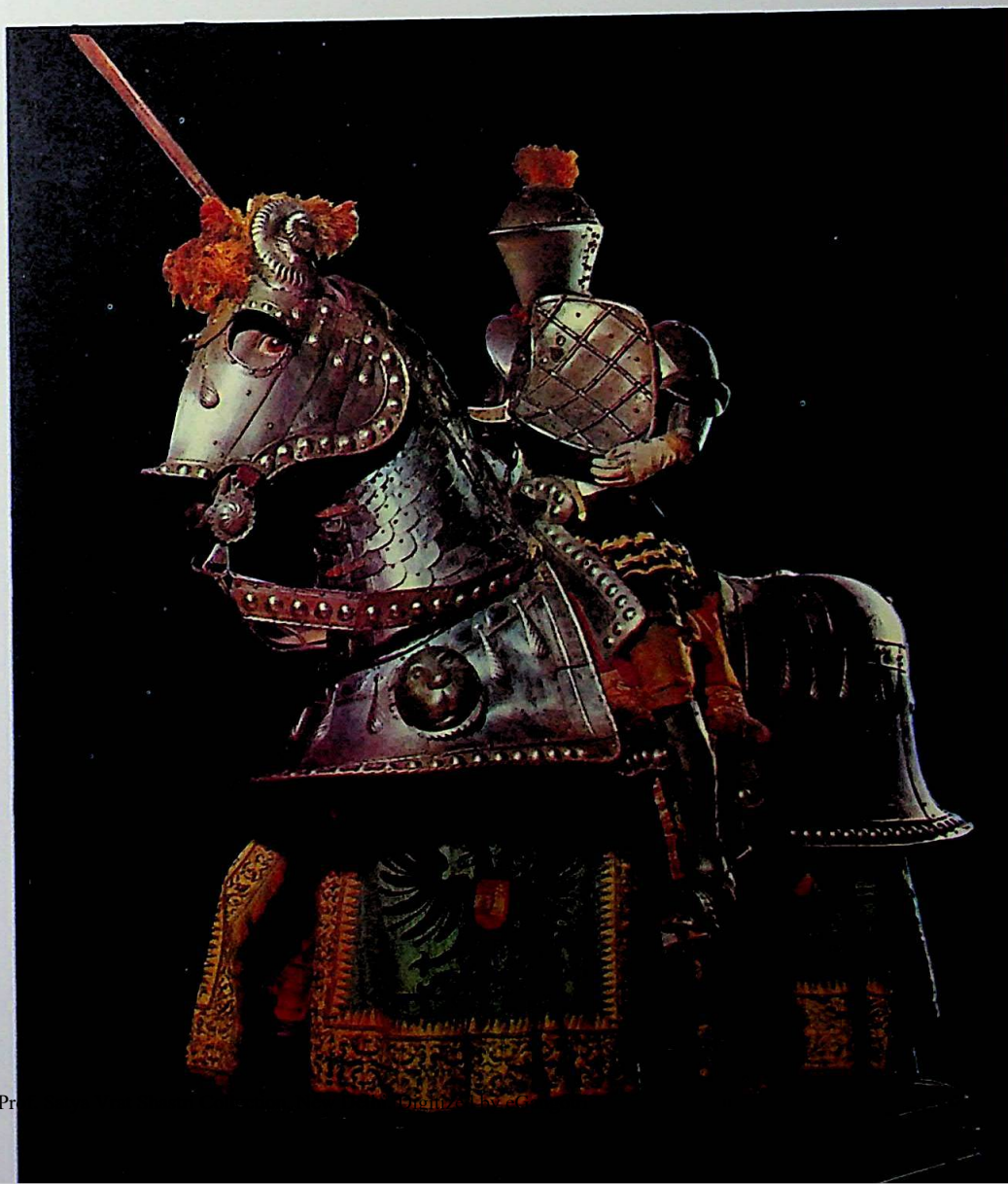
Far left: two main types of ship were used in the fifteenth century: the galley (left) and the round ship (right). Guns had been mounted on both since the beginning of the century. Detail from *The Triumph of Maximilian*. (Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.)

Left: the twin-headed eagle of the house of Habsburg. (Studio Hachette.)
Below: the growing complexity of the tournament in the sixteenth century stimulated the craft of the armourer. His concern for beauty and comfort is exemplified by Charles V's suit of armour. (Real Armeria, Madrid.)

missionary orders, especially the Franciscans, who undertook the education and peaceful conversion of the natives. Finally, there were the lawyers who kept a close watch on the activities of the provincial governors and viceroys through the *audiencias* or courts of appeal. All important decisions, however, were taken in Spain, which did not make for efficiency.

Stock farming was the typical occupation of the New World Spaniard, arable farming being mainly in Indian hands. Horses, cattle and sheep were imported in large numbers and great estates grew up around ranch houses. In the tropical coast lands sugar was produced. African negroes, who could be enslaved as they were not Castilian subjects, were imported to work the plantations.

Spain also imported gold and silver from the New World. To begin with mining was a relatively simple matter of prospecting and washing in streams, but very productive silver mines were discovered at Potosi in 1545 and Zacatecas in 1548. Extensive plant was set up to extract silver from the ore, usually by a mercury amalgamation process. The crown claimed a fifth of all the metal produced and employed a large number of.





agents to weigh, test and stamp the silver ingots as they issued from the mines and to prevent smuggling. About the middle of the century a convoy system was devised to protect the bullion cargoes crossing the Atlantic.

Charles V's empire

Personal government and particularism (i.e., the desire of certain countries to govern themselves) were the essential characteristics of Charles V's vast empire.

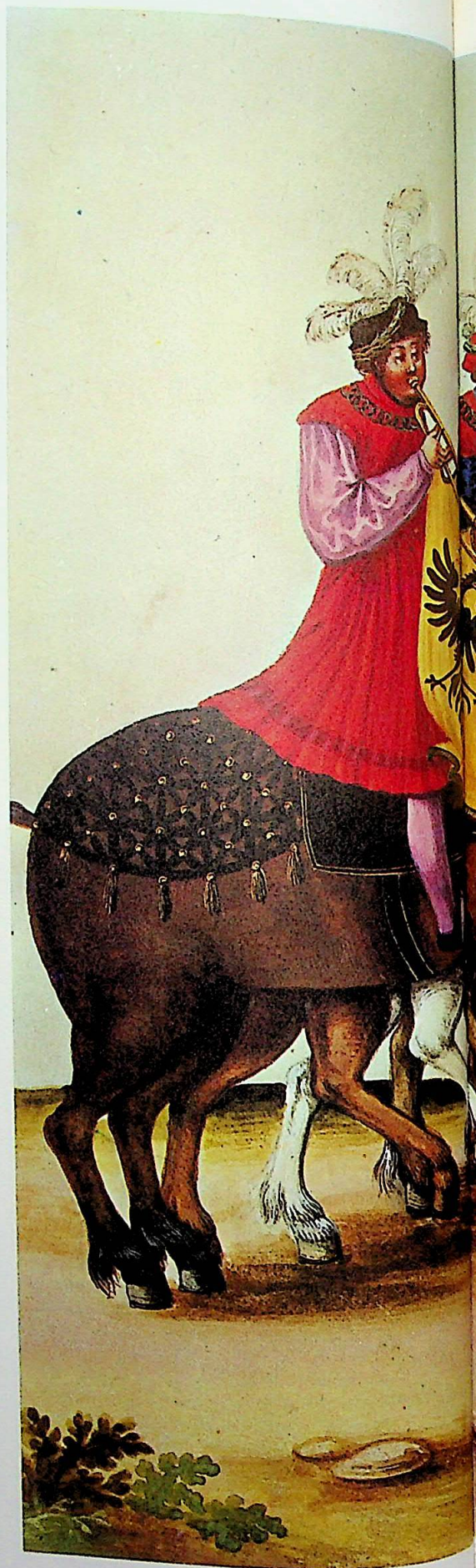
The grand chancellor, Mercurino de Gattinara (1518–30), believed that the imperial title gave Charles authority over the whole world for it was 'ordained by God himself . . . and approved by the birth, life and death of our Redeemer Christ.' Like his compatriot Dante he saw the empire as a unified whole centred on Italy and the emperor as legislator for the whole world 'following the path of the good emperor Justinian.'

But this vision died with Gattinara. In practice the empire was unified only in the emperor's person: otherwise it had no common institutions. To deal with the vast amount of paper work Charles was assisted by two secretaries, one for Spain, Italy and the Mediterranean, and another for territories north of the Alps. The two secretaries, Francisco de los Cobos and Nicholas Perrenot, lord of Granvelle, were men of considerable ability, but they were not as significant as Gattinara had been before 1530.

Charles V also employed members of his family as governors-general, regents or even kings in his dominions. The Netherlands,

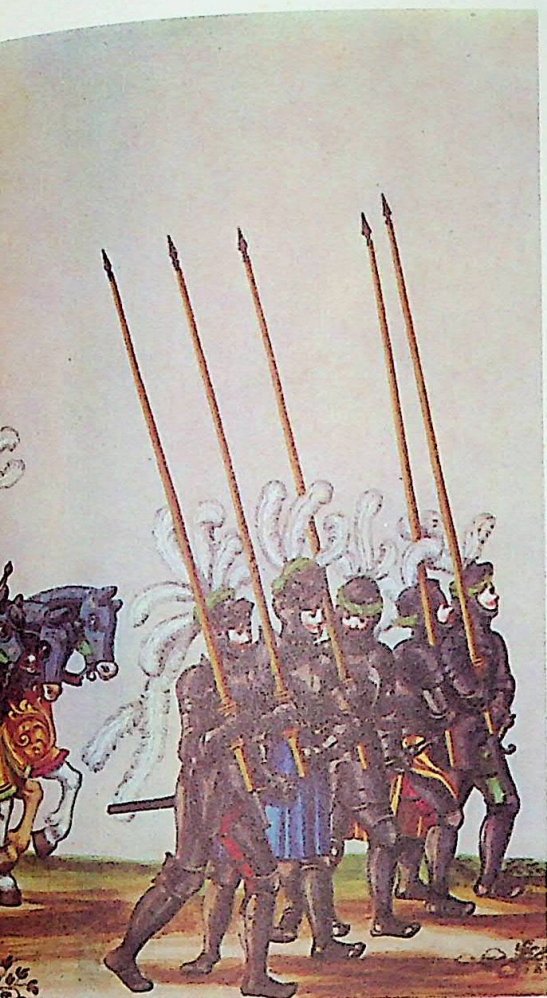
At the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 Charles V tried to heal the religious division of Germany. A Lutheran confession of faith of a conciliatory nature was read out aloud by the Saxon chancellor (above) but the Catholics would not accept it.

Contemporary engraving by M. Herz and G. Köler. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.) Right: imperial trumpeters and drummers. Detail from The Triumph of Maximilian. (Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.)









Despite the growing prestige of infantry in the sixteenth century, heavy cavalry remained the aristocracy of war. Until the 1520s battles continued to be decided by the lance, pike, halberd and sword.

Left: armour of the sixteenth century. (Museo del Ejército, Madrid.)

Above: imperial men-at-arms. Detail from The Triumph of Maximilian I. (Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.)

the empire itself and Spain were always entrusted to a Habsburg or his consort after 1529. Non-royal viceroys were appointed only in the Italian territories. The emperor was ably served by his relatives, notably by the two regents of the Netherlands, his aunt, Margaret of Austria (1518–30), and his sister, Mary of Hungary (1531–35).

Yet Charles reserved to himself ultimate control over policy and administration. Despite the enormous distances which messengers had to cover, he insisted on taking all important decisions himself in consultation with those advisers who accompanied him on his constant travels. This did not make for efficient administration especially as Charles was unable to take decisions quickly. He also kept a firm control over public appointments and all forms of patronage. Hence the passionate longing of his subjects that he should reside with them.

The emperor's failure to develop a centralised organisation for his empire outside his own person was not, however, solely due to the view he took of his office. It was a result of the intense particularism existing in the different countries making up the empire. The Sicilians, the Spaniards, the Germans and, above all, the Netherlanders were intensely devoted to their own laws, customs, privileges and institutions, and would not have tolerated any diminution of them in the interest of a more unified empire. In 1534, for example, the Estates-General rejected a proposal for a defensive union in the Netherlands because they felt it would undermine provincial liberties.

Economically Charles V preferred to comply with vested interests, local traditions and his own immediate financial needs rather than attempt to impose some kind of unity on the empire. It was for this reason that the Aragonese were not allowed to participate in the Spanish colonial trade, despite Castile's inability to supply the colonists with all the manufactured goods they needed.

Charles V and the Netherlands

Nowhere was the particularism pervading the empire more evident than in the Netherlands. Charles wanted them to contribute their share of imperial expenditure and he was successful up to a point, but the Estates insisted that the redress of grievances must precede any discussion of new taxes and that they should control the collection and expenditure of revenues.

As taxation became heavier after 1530 there was a growing volume of discontent which culminated in Ghent's refusal in 1539 to pay its share of taxes voted by the Estates-General. The rebellion had to be quelled by force and the punishment inflicted on the citizens was severe. Ghent forfeited all its rights and privileges, its public treasure was confiscated and its arms were taken away.

Religion was another source of serious

trouble in the Netherlands. Lutheranism reached Antwerp in 1519 making many converts. It was followed by Anabaptism with its apocalyptic vision of the Kingdom of God on earth and its revolutionary appeal to the socially oppressed. Charles V dealt with heresy much more vigorously in the Netherlands than in Germany where he was less powerful. About 1600 heretics, including the Englishman, William Tyndale, were put to death in the Netherlands during his reign.

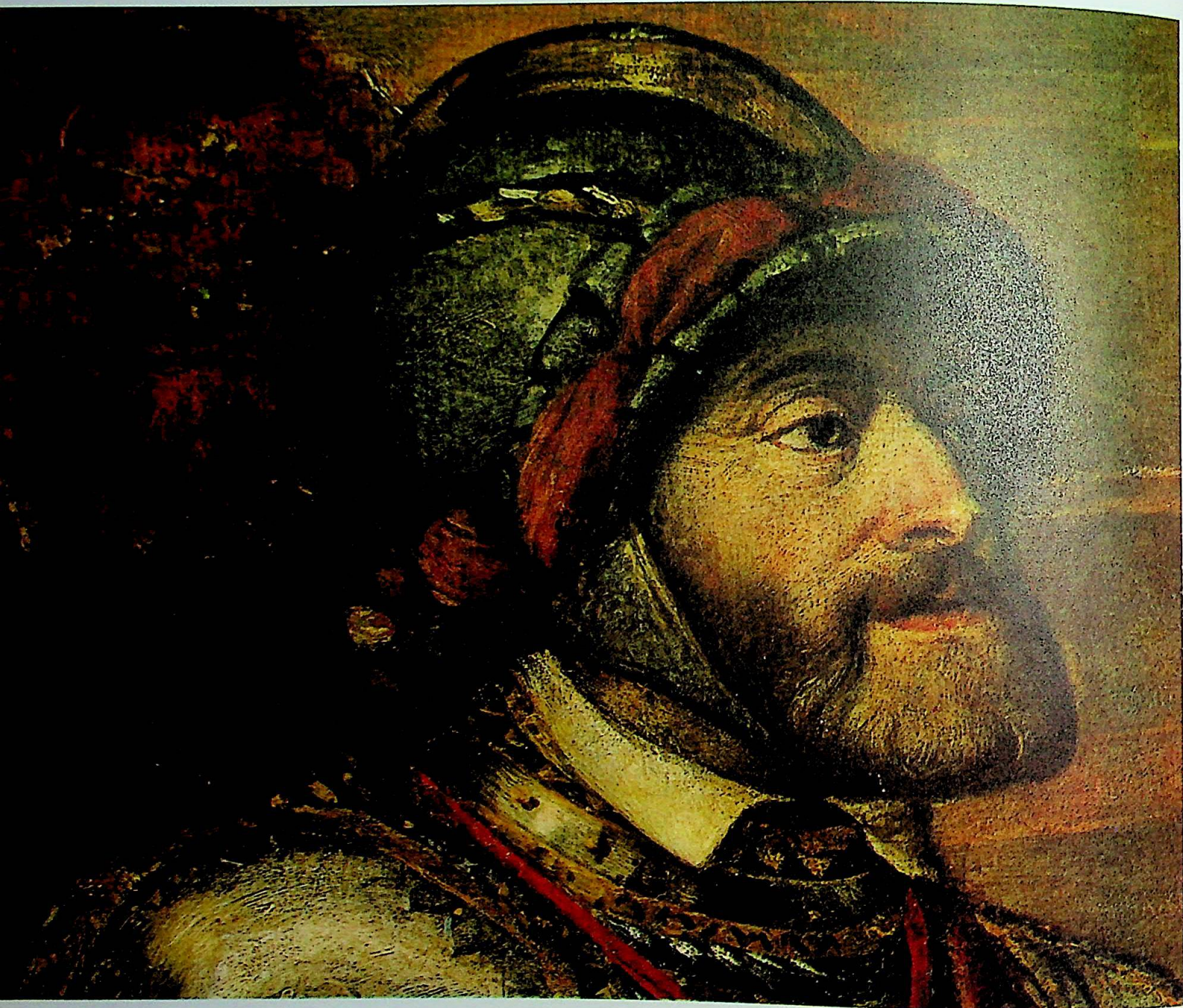
Yet Charles never had to face a general revolt in the Netherlands. This was because the provinces did not always see eye to eye, and also because the emperor was sometimes prepared to compromise. Thus he allowed certain provinces to exclude the Inquisition and mitigated the harshness of his anti-heresy laws in their application to Antwerp. But the fact remains that the situation in the Netherlands was not calm under Charles V. The general revolt which broke out under Philip II in 1564 was the result of a financial, religious and political crisis that had been developing for some time. In fact, the Habsburg system in the Netherlands was on the verge of dissolution by 1555.

The last years

During the last decade of his reign Charles V was concerned mainly with three questions: his rivalry with France, the Turkish threat, and heresy in Germany. They overlapped to some extent, since Francis I continued to intrigue with the Turks and the German Protestants.

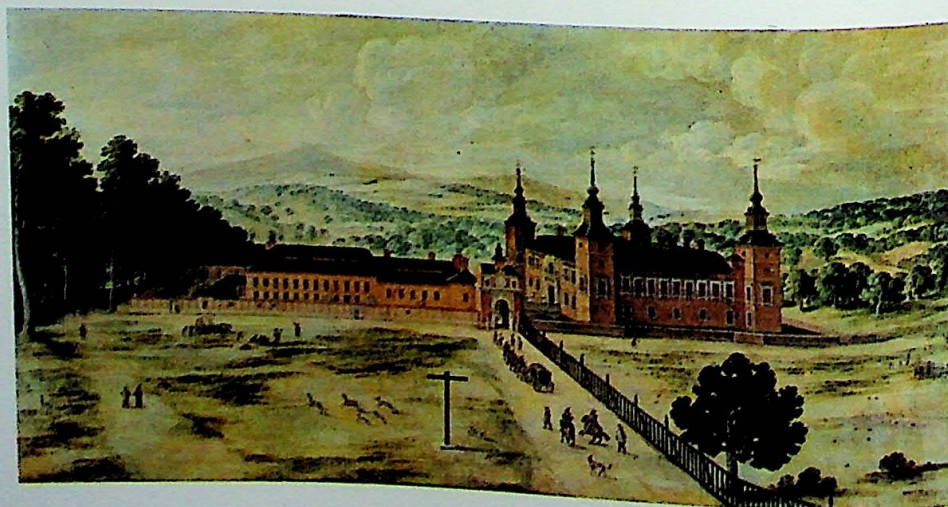
In November 1535 the Milanese question was reopened by the death of Francesco Sforza without issue. Francis claimed his duchy for the duke of Orléans and in February 1536 a French army overran Savoy and occupied Turin. Charles strongly denounced this action in a speech before the new pope, Paul III, and his court. He even challenged Francis to a duel. In order to relieve the pressure on Milan he invaded Provence but the scorched-earth tactics of Anne, de Montmorency, constable of France, exhausted his men. Finding that Marseilles was impregnable, he retreated to Italy and signed the Truce of Nice (June 1538). Soon afterwards he met Francis at Aiguesmortes and in 1539 passed through France on his way to quell the Ghent revolt. No peace treaty was signed, however, and in 1542 the war flared up again. Charles made an alliance with Henry VIII and visited Germany to obtain aid. Then, in July 1544, he invaded France and even threatened Paris, while Henry VIII besieged Boulogne. But as Charles wanted a respite to deal with the German situation he signed the Peace of Crêpy in September.

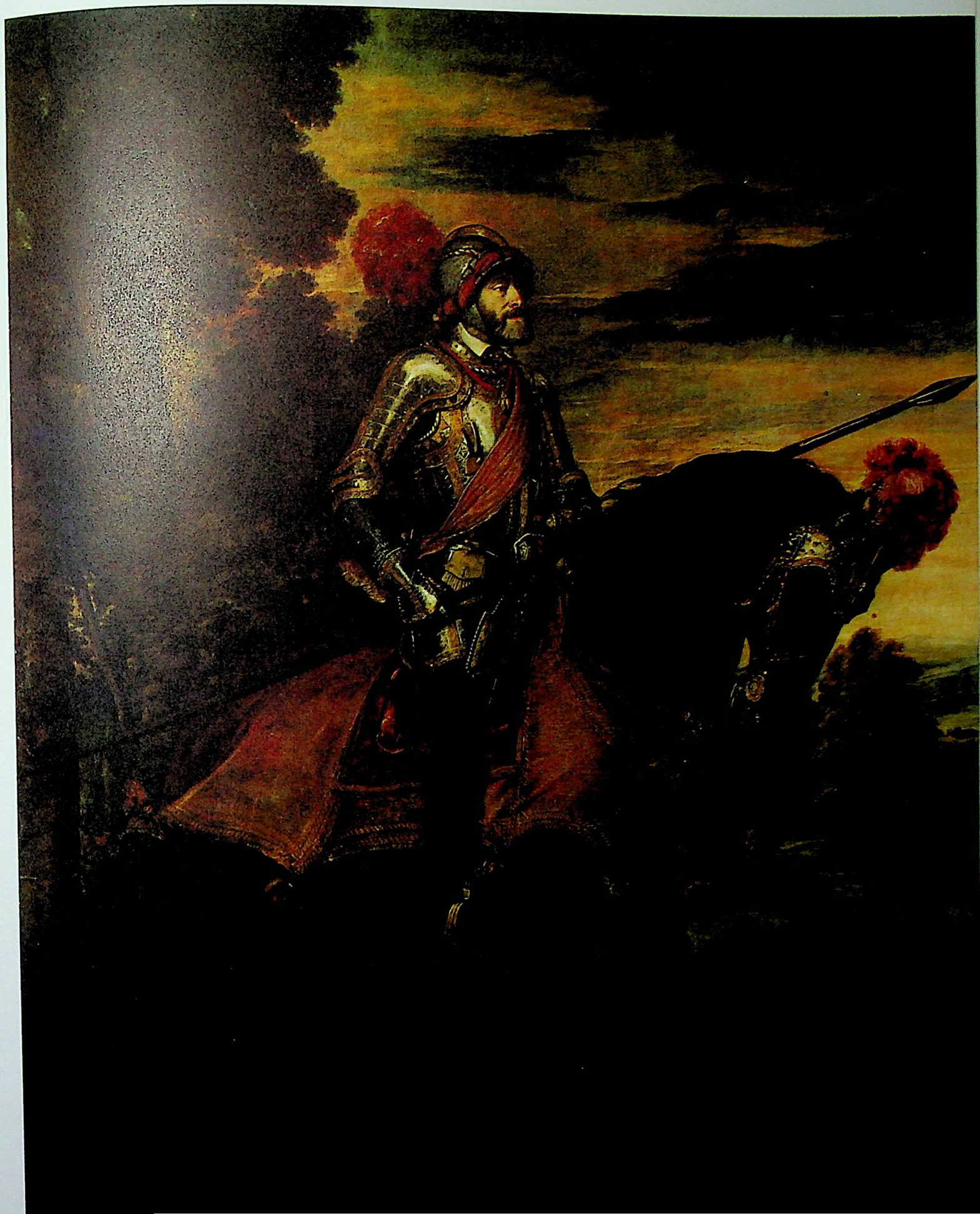
The Turks meanwhile continued their acts of aggression in the Mediterranean. Doria's defeat at Prevesa in 1538 destroyed the emperor's hopes of carrying the war into

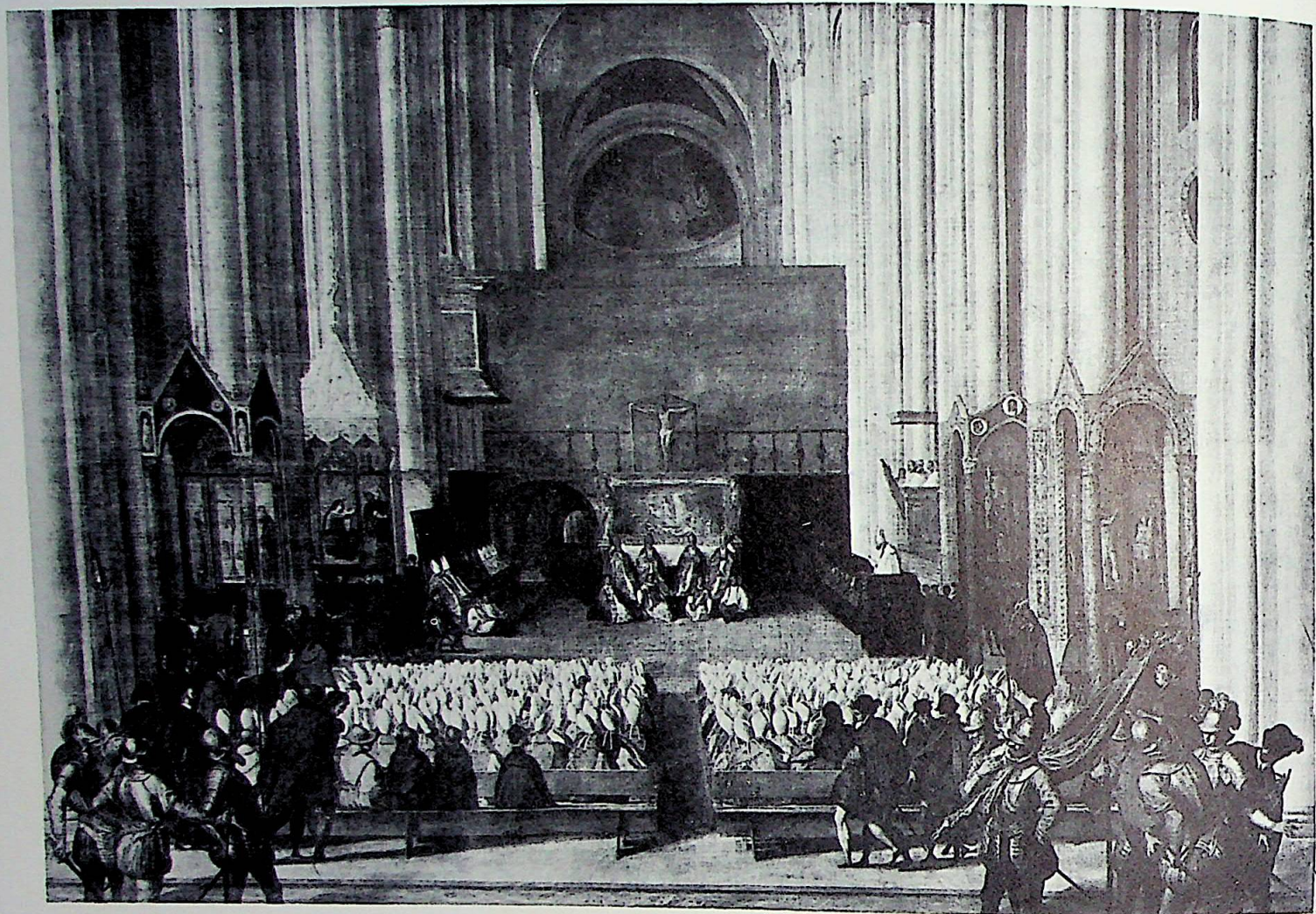


Above and opposite: the emperor Charles V as Titian painted him after he had defeated the German Protestant princes at Mühlberg in April 1547. He is wearing his general's scarf over one shoulder and the insignia of the Golden Fleece on his breastplate. (Museo del Prado, Madrid.)

Right: The palace of the Prado near Madrid where the emperor resided from time to time. He seldom stayed for long in any one place. (El Escorial, Madrid.)







the eastern Mediterranean. Thereafter he had to be content with more limited objectives.

In October 1541 he planned to strike hard at Algiers. An impressive armada sailed from the Balearics but it was so severely damaged by a storm off the African coast that the expedition was abandoned. In 1543 Khair-ad-Din captured Nice and his fleet was allowed to winter at Toulon. It was described as a second Constantinople with a lively slave market where Christians were offered for sale. When the old corsair died in 1546 his work was carried on by the equally formidable Dragut, who conquered Tripoli in 1551. The western Mediterranean was not freed from the Turkish menace till Don John of Austria's great victory at Lepanto in 1571.

The Peace of Crépy enabled Charles to attend to the German question. Behind a smokescreen of doctrinal discussions he proceeded to detach Maurice of Saxony and others from the Schmalkaldic League. He was also reconciled with the Catholic duke of Bavaria. The Diet of Regensburg (June 1546) showed that a conflict was inevitable. While the Catholics called on the reformers to attend the Council of Trent on the pope's terms, the Protestants demanded a reform of the Church by a diet. Charles meanwhile

made an alliance with the pope against the Protestants.

The war between the emperor and the Protestant princes began with a long series of skirmishes. A decision, however, was reached at Mühlberg (24 April 1547) when Charles suddenly fell upon the flank of John Frederick's army. The fighting was soon over and the emperor claimed that he had lost less than ten men killed and wounded. When John Frederick was led into the emperor's presence he exclaimed: 'Most mighty and gracious emperor, I am your captive'. 'Ah!', rejoined Charles, 'you call me emperor now, do you? You lately gave me another style.' (The princes had distributed broadsheets calling him 'Charles of Ghent, who thinks he is emperor'.)

Charles hoped to use his victory to establish an imperial league on the lines of the Swabian League, a confederation of south German towns formed in 1487. The pope's decision to move the council from Trent to Bologna helped to bring him closer to the German Protestants. At the Diet of Augsburg (September 1547) he stated his determination to bring the council back to Trent. He expected the Lutherans to attend it there and, in the meantime, to live in peace with the Catholics.

On 30 June 1548 he issued the Augsburg

Interim which aimed at keeping the possibilities of conciliation open. Its underlying assumption was that a council would some day reach a settlement which both sides were held to have accepted in principle. In practice the *Interim* worked out as *cuius regio, eius religio*; i.e., subjects must follow the faith of their ruler.

In the middle of the sixteenth century Pope Paul III initiated a movement for the reform of the Roman Church which has come to be known as the Counter-Reformation. A General Council of the Church, which met at Trent between 1545 and 1563, defined Catholic doctrine more precisely and tightened Church discipline. Above: here we see the final session of the council in a painting attributed to Titian, c. 1564. (Louvre, Paris.)

Right: in 1534 the Spanish army was grouped into new model units called tercios, composed of arquebusiers and pikemen. Each tercio was about 3,000 men strong and as a formation it dominated the battlefields of Europe for more than a century. A painting of Philip II's army in action. (El Escorial, Madrid.)



Abdication of Charles V

In September 1551 King Henry II of France declared war on the emperor and soon afterwards entered into negotiations with Maurice of Saxony and other German Protestants. In exchange for a subsidy they recognised Henry as vicar in the empire and allowed him to occupy the 'three bishoprics' of Metz, Toul and Verdun, as well as Cambrai and other imperial cities whose language was not German. Charles V found himself trapped in Germany without any money to raise an army. He thought of making a dash to the Netherlands but was advised not to do so by his sister, Mary of Hungary. She claimed, moreover, that she had no money or means of raising any.

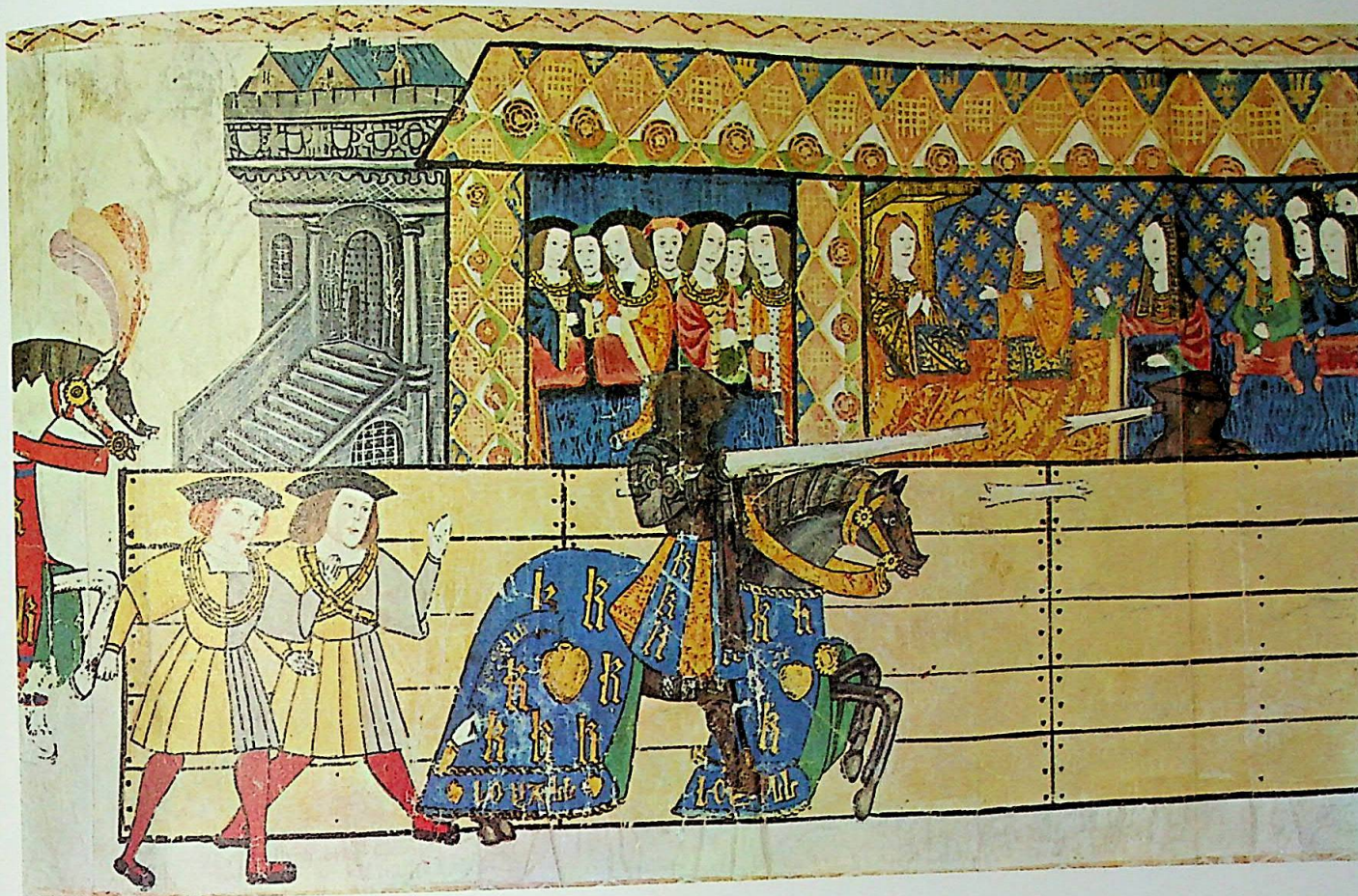
During May 1552 Maurice of Saxony tried to capture the emperor at Innsbruck, but Charles gave him the slip across the Brenner pass and down the Drave valley to Villach in Carinthia. Some years later he recalled how two Lutheran emissaries had met him on a mountain track and made him an offer: if he would only listen to the Protestant princes they would not pursue him but go with him against the Turk and set him on the throne of Constantinople. But Charles had told them that he wanted no more realms, only Christ crucified, and had spurred on his horse and left them.

Having failed in his attempt to seize the emperor, Maurice of Saxony came to terms with his brother, Ferdinand, at Passau, in August 1552, and joined him in a campaign against the Turks in the course of which he was killed. Meanwhile, Charles determined to oust the French from Metz in spite of his sister's advice that he should desist from so dangerous an enterprise. He felt that he could not allow Henry II to threaten the Netherlands and the route connecting them with Franche-Comté. The siege of Metz was begun in November 1552 but the city was well fortified and ably defended by the duke of Guise. Bombardments, mining operations and assaults all failed. Early in January Charles decided to withdraw.

Ferdinand was now left in sole charge of German affairs and at the Diet of Augsburg (September 1555) constitutional form was given to the concessions made three years before to the late Maurice of Saxony. Lutheranism was given equal legal status with Catholicism within the empire, though explicit provision was made to continue the endeavours to restore unity.

Charles V's attempt to re-establish the medieval concept of a united Christendom under the joint leadership of emperor and pope had foundered. Having already relinquished the government of his German dominions, he now decided to hand over the rest of his responsibilities, though not the imperial title itself, to his son, Philip. In October 1555 he laid down the sovereignty of the Netherlands and in January 1556 divested himself of the Spanish crowns and





their dependencies. He then retired to a country palace adjoining the monastery of Yuste in Spain, where he held court and continued, amid his devotions, to take a keen interest in the fortunes of his empire till his death in 1558.

Henceforth the nature of his empire changed radically. Instead of being a universal, Christian empire with a Burgundian soul, it became a Spanish, Catholic empire with a Castilian soul. As the flow of American silver to Spain increased during the second half of the century, the Netherlands ceased to be economically the most advanced and wealthiest part of the empire. The wars in Italy and Germany demonstrated the superiority of Spanish troops over all others. The emperor's council shed its international character and became dominated by Spaniards or Hispano-Italians. In Spain itself Erasmianism was superseded by an uncompromising orthodoxy reflected in the activities of the Inquisition. Under its new king, Philip II, Spain became the spearhead of the Counter-Reformation.

Part of Philip's inheritance was the age-old conflict with the Valois kings. His accession was followed by a renewal of war with France, but weariness on both sides led to the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (3 April 1559). France kept Metz, Toul and Verdun as well as Calais which it had recently taken from England, but it abandoned

claims in Italy and restored Savoy and Piedmont to Duke Emmanuel-Philibert. Despite its gains France emerged from the Italian wars in debilitated condition. Its financial resources were exhausted and the peace freed large numbers of soldiers for the civil wars which were about to devastate the country.

Henry VIII was at first content to leave administration in the hands of his chancellor, Thomas Wolsey.

Henry VIII was one of the best sportsmen of his day.

Above: he is taking part in a tournament in honour of his first wife, Katherine of Aragon (whose initial K is seen on the king's horse). She is watching from a gallery decorated with the Tudor rose. (Westminster Tournament Roll.)

Left: the king and his chief minister, Thomas Wolsey, riding to Guines in 1520.

Detail from anonymous painting of the Field of Cloth of Gold. (Musée de Versailles.)

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• ANNO • ETATIS •

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The Tudors

From 1485 to 1603 the Tudors rule England; Henry VIII's 'divorce' of Catherine of Aragon provokes a religious revolution; the power of the Crown and Parliament increases; the navy grows in strength and might.

The accession of Henry VII in 1485 was for long regarded as a watershed in English history. It was seen as the beginning of a 'new monarchy' able to impose its will on the turbulent nobles who had torn the country apart in the Wars of the Roses. The first Tudor, it was alleged, had infused new life into the dormant machinery of government and by careful management had built up the royal revenues to such an extent that he was able to bequeath more than a million pounds in gold and silver to his son. However, recently it has been shown that some

of the administrative reforms attributed to Henry, notably his use of the Chamber as a department of national finance, were initiated by his predecessors. His financial achievement was generally less spectacular than was once supposed. It cannot be proved that he died a millionaire. Nor did 1485 mark the end of civil unrest, which flared up during Henry VII's reign in the revolts of Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck.

Yet Henry VII's achievement was not negligible. Legally he had a very poor claim to the throne. On his father's side he had no

Left: Henry VIII in the dress that he wore for his wedding to Anne of Cleves in January 1540. Painting after Hans Holbein. (National Gallery, Rome.)

Two outstanding ministers helped Henry VIII to govern his Kingdom: above left, Cardinal Wolsey who was disgraced in 1529. Anonymous portrait. (National Portrait Gallery, London.)

Above right: Thomas Cromwell whose ascendancy lasted from 1532 till 1540. Portrait by Hans Holbein the Younger, c. 1534. (Frick Collection, New York.)

The Field of Cloth of Gold in June 1520 was a most elaborate and costly affair (right). It was held between Guines and Ardres, near Calais. The English built a temporary palace of timber and the French erected magnificent tents. Jousting occupied much of the time. Anonymous painting.

(Musée de Versailles.)

Below: English royal tents, 1520. Drawing.
(British Museum, London.)

claim at all. His mother belonged to the Beaufort family, which traced its illegitimate descent from John of Gaunt. Richard II had legitimised the family but Henry IV had debarred it from the throne. Many people had a better claim than Henry Tudor, notably the young earl of Warwick, the son of Edward IV's brother, Clarence.

Henry's method of overcoming these disadvantages was forceful and direct. He proclaimed himself king by the grace of God, seeing that the Almighty had given him the victory at Bosworth, and got Parliament to register his accession and the right of his heirs to succeed to the throne. As for Warwick, he was beheaded. By marrying his children into some of the royal families of Europe Henry VII succeeded in establishing his dynasty on a firm and internationally respectable footing. This was his greatest achievement.

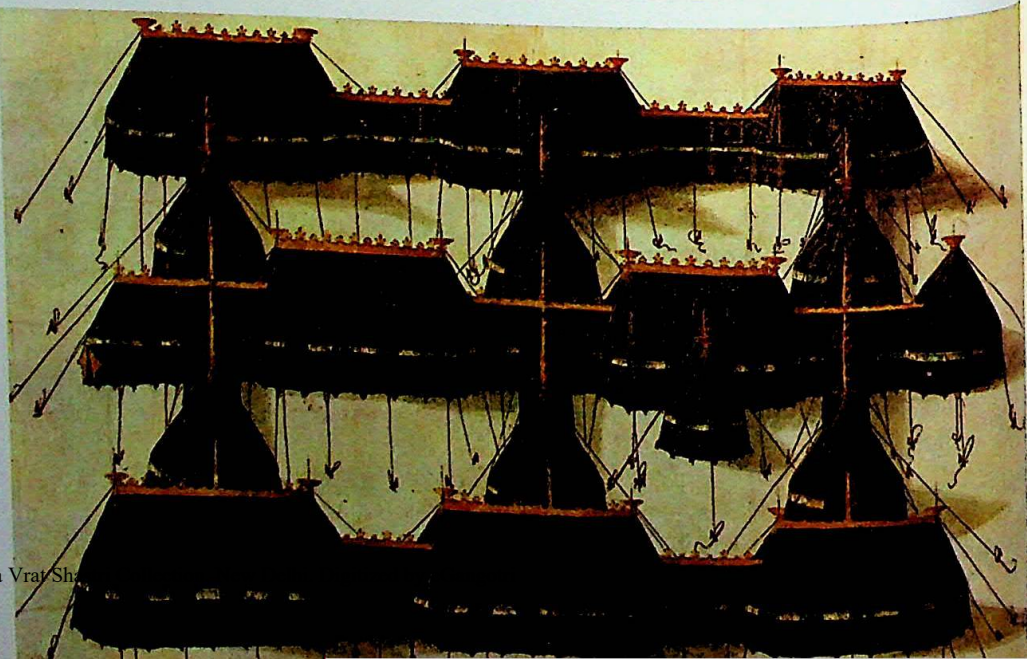
Henry VIII (1509–47)

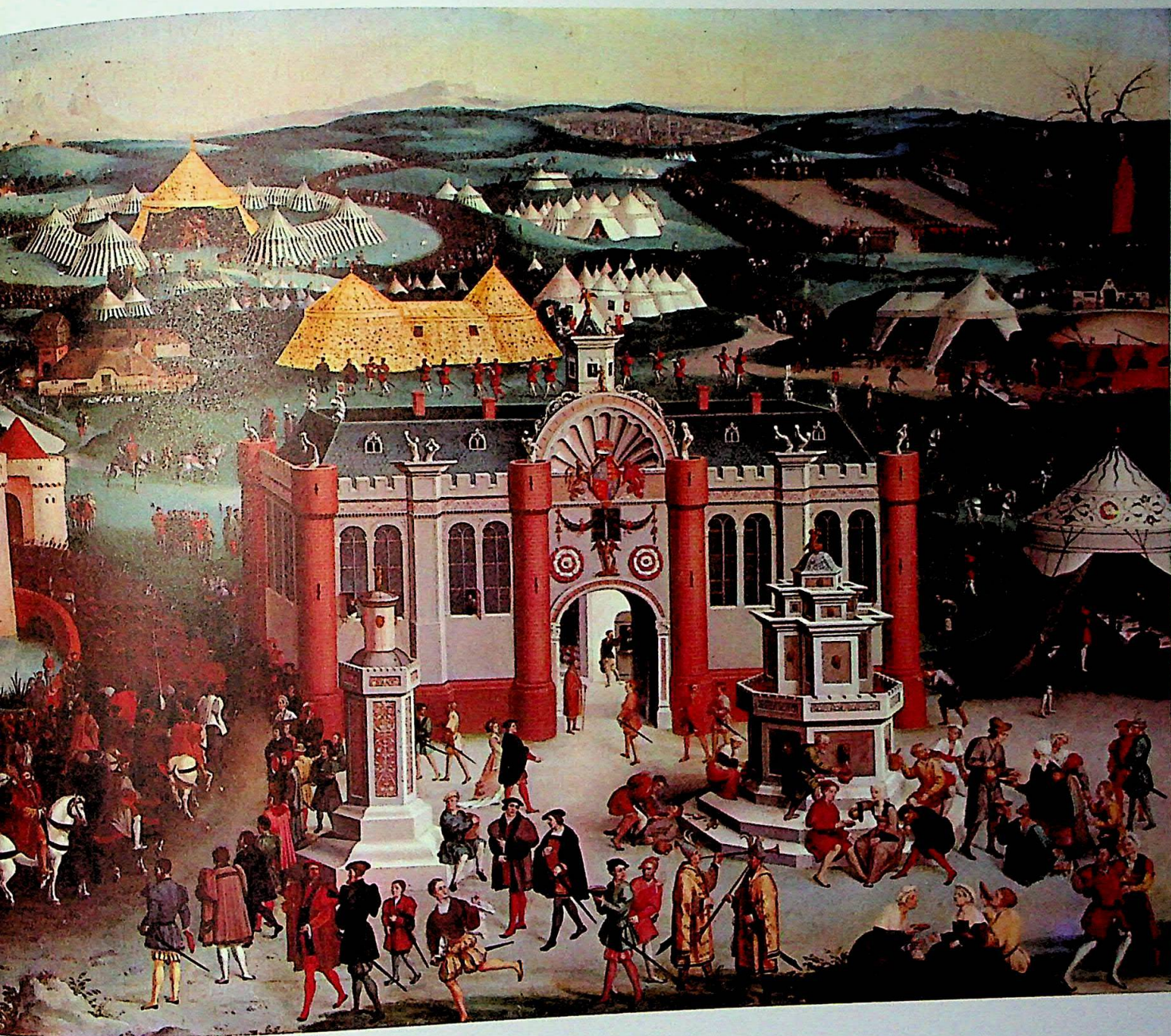
Another obstacle which the Tudors had to overcome was the survival of independent jurisdictions within the kingdom. The most important was the Church, which had its own law courts and owed allegiance to the pope. As long as it remained independent, the king could not call himself master in his own house. Henry VIII solved this problem by severing the traditional connection with Rome and setting himself up as Supreme Head of the English Church. By so doing he immeasurably enhanced the prestige of kingship; having fixed the crown firmly on his head, he added a halo.

The heretical roots of the English Reformation

The Henrician Reformation was not just 'an act of state', however, it was also a popular movement. Recent research has shown that Lollardy (the heretical movement founded by John Wyclif in the fourteenth century) was far from extinct by the end of the fifteenth century. The act books of the ecclesiastical tribunals and the bishops' registers show a steady rise in the number of prosecutions, abjurations and punishments for heresy from the 1480s onwards.

Dissent was concentrated in Buckinghamshire, London, Essex and Kent, but there were Lollards also at Coventry and in the





large diocese of York. Although Lollardy lacked a central administration its wandering missionaries kept scattered congregations in touch with each other. Most Lollards belonged to the common people, though skilled workers outnumbered labourers and husbandmen. They also included some lesser clergymen, London merchants and many women.

It has been claimed that Lollardy provided 'a spring-board of critical dissent from which the Protestant Reformation could overleap the walls of orthodoxy'. Lollards certainly helped to disseminate Lutheran literature, notably Tyndale's *New Testament*. It is arguable, though, that Lollardy was a hindrance to the spread of Lutheranism, for it provided an alternative form of dissent at the popular level, and provoked a rigorous

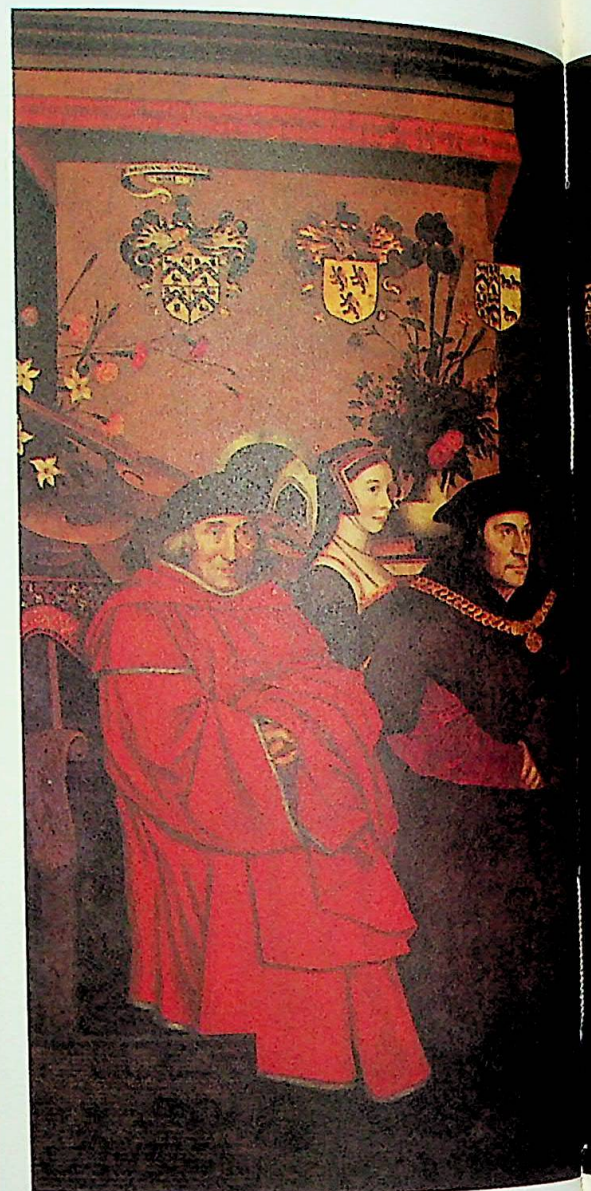
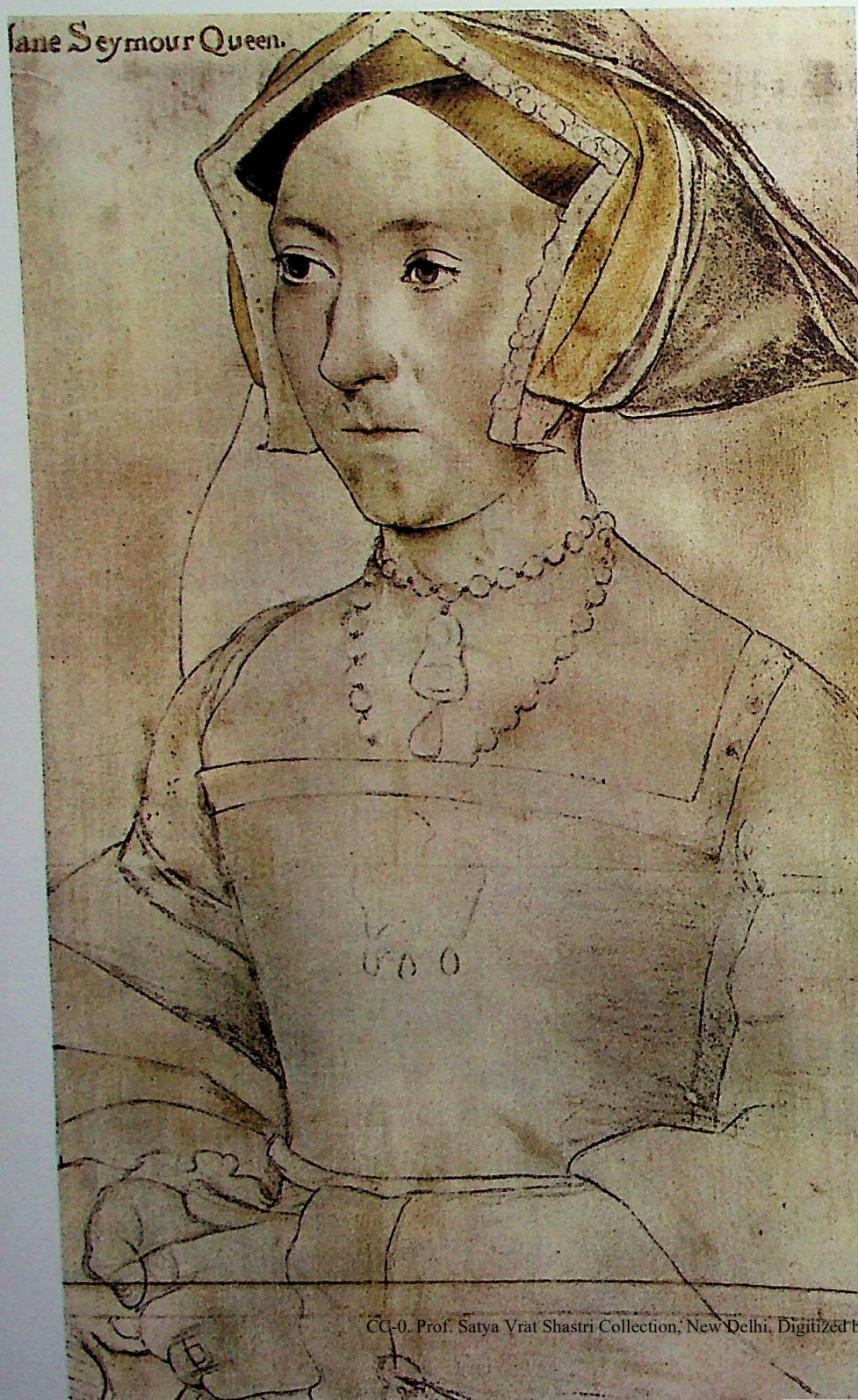
campaign of persecution which was well under way by the time Lutheranism first appeared in England.

Luther's name became known in London soon after he had posted up his ninety-five theses. Copies of his works were sent to England by John Froben, the Basle printer, as early as 1519 and they continued to circulate despite censorship measures taken by the government. They were smuggled in by merchants trading with Antwerp or Germany and distributed by the Society of Christian Brethren which has been aptly described as a kind of 'forbidden book of the month club'. Yet Lutheranism made relatively few converts in England. It was avidly taken up by some young intellectuals at Cambridge, who used to gather at the White Horse Tavern, and it found support among

German merchants of the London Steelyard. Otherwise its impact on the English public at large seems to have been small.

Henry VIII's government was opposed to Luther from the start. In May 1521 Wolsey presided over a solemn book-burning at St Paul's Cross, at which John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, preached a sermon against the new doctrine. Sir Thomas More who was equally hostile to it conducted a visitation of the London Steelyard and was empowered by the bishop of London to read Lutheran books so as to reply to them in English. Henry VIII himself attacked Luther in a book called *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum*, for which he was given the title of 'Defender of the Faith' by the pope. Yet only a few years later Henry cast aside his allegiance to Rome.

Because of his refusal to accept the Henrician Reformation Sir Thomas More, lord chancellor and author of Utopia, was executed in 1535. He is seen (right) with members of his family and descendants. Anonymous painting (partly after Holbein) (National Portrait Gallery, London.)
Below: Jane Seymour, Henry VIII's third wife and Edward VI's mother. Drawing by Hans Holbein the Younger (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)



The royal 'divorce' and the break with Rome

As an act of state the Henrician Reformation was anything but doctrinal. It stemmed directly from the king's determination to obtain an annulment of his first marriage to Catherine of Aragon so as to be free to marry Anne Boleyn. The 'king's great matter' was closely bound up with the succession problem. All Catherine's children had died, except Mary, and the absence of a male heir threatened the survival of the Tudor dynasty.

The prospect of a woman ruler, for which there was no satisfactory precedent in English history, was viewed with apprehension. If she were to marry a foreigner England would become tied to the destinies of another country. This had to be avoided and Henry was confident that the pope would allow him to remarry, for Catherine had been the wife of his deceased brother, Arthur, and the Bible said: 'And if a man



Below: Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's second wife and Elizabeth I's mother. She was beheaded in 1536. (National Portrait Gallery, London.)



shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing . . . they shall be childless'.

If Clement VII had been a different person Henry would probably have got what he wanted, but the pope was a timid and shifty character, mainly interested in the political situation in Italy. The moral issues raised by Henry's demand for an annulment did not worry him. He even suggested that the king might be allowed to have two wives at once. What really concerned him was that Catherine was the emperor's aunt and that if he gave way to Henry he would lose Charles V's military assistance on which depended the restoration of the Medici to power in Florence. He authorised Wolsey and Campeggio (the Italian papal legate) to try the king's divorce suit in England in 1529 but secretly instructed his legate to procrastinate. Eventually he revoked the case to Rome after he had given a verbal promise not to do so.

An immediate consequence of the pope's action was the fall of Cardinal Wolsey in

October 1529. For three years thereafter Henry VIII ruled without a chief minister. It has been suggested that royal policy during these years was 'unimaginative, bombastic and sterile' and that it only became 'direct, simple and successful' after Thomas Cromwell's ascendancy in 1532. Henry VIII did not wish to break with Rome, however, until every approach had been tried. What a triumph he would have scored if the pope had given way!

The aim of the king's policy was to put pressure on the pope by a campaign of intimidation against the Church in England. In 1531 he extorted a subsidy from the clergy after he had accused them of offending the law of the realm by exercising their independent jurisdiction. As the pope failed to react the campaign was intensified. In 1532 the English Church gave up its legislative independence in a document called the *Surrender of the Clergy*. The death of Archbishop Warham in the same year enabled Henry to appoint his own creature, Thomas

Cranmer, as primate. In May 1533 he declared the king's marriage null and void at a special court held at Dunstable. The decree came none too soon for Henry was already secretly married to Anne Boleyn. She was crowned in June and in September Elizabeth was born.

In the meantime a frontal attack was mounted by Thomas Cromwell on papal authority in England. This was done by means of statute law. Never before had Parliament been called upon to participate so actively in policy making. The Reformation Parliament lasted on and off from 1529 to 1536. It has been called the first modern Parliament because its members were at last given a chance to know each other and to form groups, but nothing comparable with the modern party system as yet existed. Henry did not need to bully its members into accepting his policies as was once thought; a fundamental harmony of interests existed between them.

The most important act passed in 1533



Left: Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, one of the architects of the English Reformation. Painting by Gerhard Flicke, 1546. (National Portrait Gallery, London.)

Right: Henry VIII transmits the succession to his young son, Edward VI, seen here with his council. An idea of the extreme Protestantism which marked the new reign is conveyed by the symbolism of this anonymous painting. (National Portrait Gallery, London.)

From the doctrinal standpoint the Henrician Reformation did not bring about any radical changes. The Ten Articles which Convocation adopted in 1536 made no concessions to the Lutherans despite a conciliatory phraseology. *The Bishops' Book* of 1537 was a conservative statement of belief. Two years later the Act of Six Articles laid down heavy penalties for those who denied the doctrine of transubstantiation and other fundamental Catholic beliefs. Even if Henry himself did incline towards a less orthodox position towards the end of his reign, England did not become a Protestant country till the reign of Edward VI.

Edward VI (1547-53)

The first major crisis which the Tudor monarchy had to face was the minority of Edward VI, who was only nine at his accession in January 1547. His father, Henry VIII, had provided for a council of regency of equal members but its first act was to appoint one of its members, Edward Seymour, earl of Hertford as Protector and duke of Somerset.

Being a man of liberal views, Somerset began by sweeping away Henry VIII's stringent treason laws and the old laws against heresy. People were suddenly able to debate freely and openly about religion, and the situation soon got out of hand. Preachers stormed in their pulpits; printing presses produced a flood of libels and satires; Protestant divines flocked to England from the continent and clamoured for doctrinal change.

Though sympathetic to the Protestant cause, Somerset did not wish to provoke the mass of the people, who continued to worship as they had always done. He, therefore, embarked on a policy of piecemeal religious change aimed at causing the least offence to anyone. Cranmer's Order of Communion of 1548 contained nothing flagrantly hostile to Catholic beliefs, and the first Prayer Book of 1549 was 'an ingenious essay in ambiguity'. It left much of the old order as it was, though religious services were henceforth to be held in English instead of Latin.

In general the Prayer Book was accepted without resistance, but in Devon and Cornwall it provoked a serious popular rising known as the Western Rebellion. This was ruthlessly crushed by John Russell, earl of

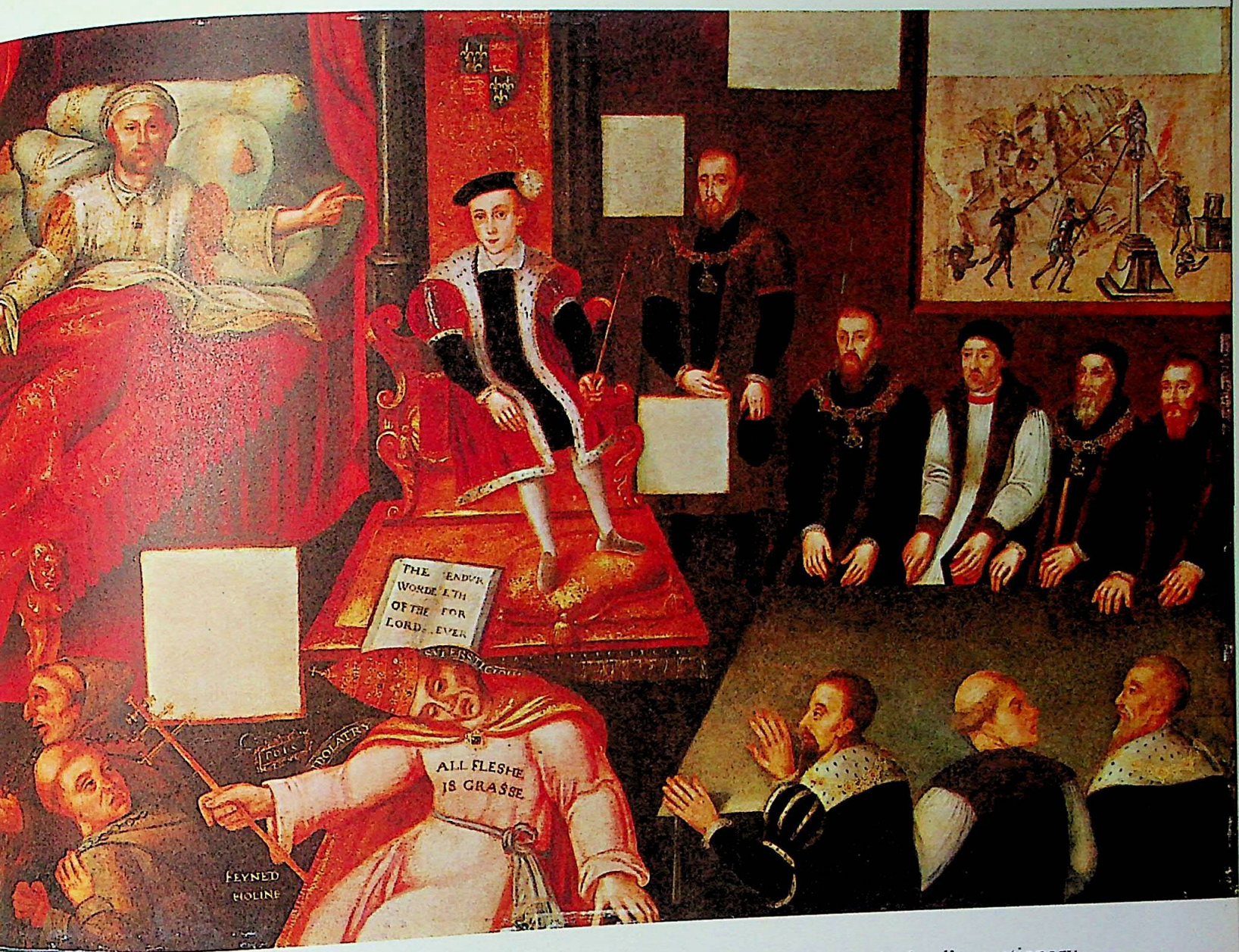
was the Act of Appeals. Its resounding preamble to the effect 'that this realm of England is an Empire' implied that England was a country independent of any external authority, temporal or spiritual. Under the Act of Supremacy Henry VIII became officially Supreme Head of the English Church.

Anti-clericalism was strong in England in the early sixteenth century, yet it could not be taken as certain that Henry's religious policy would not be resisted. A campaign of anti-papal propaganda was, therefore, mounted by the government and an example made of Sir Thomas More and John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, after they had refused to take the Succession Oath imposed on all the king's subjects. This declared that the succession to the throne was vested in the children of Henry's second marriage. Fisher had supported Queen Catherine and More had shown his disapproval of royal policy

by resigning the chancellorship in 1532. They were found guilty of high treason and beheaded on Tower Green in the summer of 1535.

In 1536 an act was passed dissolving the smaller monasteries, which were alleged to be centres of 'manifest sin, vicious, carnal and abominable living'. This charge was largely unfounded; the government's real motive was the confiscation of monastic wealth. Although the larger monasteries were described as 'great, honourable and solemn' in 1536, they were not spared three years later.

The dissolution of the monasteries was one of the most spectacular revolutions in English history. Within four years landed property worth nearly twenty million pounds passed from one set of owners to another. It was put on the market at a time when land was much in demand and a vested interest in the Reformation was established.



Bedford, with an army that included foreign mercenaries.

Somerset's social policy also ended in catastrophe and bloodshed. By 1547 the economic situation had become critical: prices were rising steadily and landowners tried to keep abreast of inflation by resorting to expedients which caused social hardship and unrest. They enclosed arable land, turning it into pasture so as to take advantage of the cloth boom, encroached on common land and went in for rack-renting. At first the government merely made the situation worse by selling off the lands of the dissolved chantries to speculators and continuing the debasement of the coinage begun by Henry VIII.

In 1548, however, Somerset tried to put into effect some of the reforms advocated by a group of enlightened theorists called the Commonwealth Men. He introduced a Subsidy Act to restrict enclosure by taxing sheep

and cloth and set up a special commission to enforce existing anti-enclosure statutes. The upshot of this well-intentioned policy was another revolt.

During the summer of 1549 the common people of Norfolk rose under Robert Ket's leadership. Unlike the western rebels, they were not concerned with religion. Their enemies were the gentry, who were refusing to comply with the government's economic measures. Since they regarded the Protector as their friend, they did not march on London but simply staged a kind of sit-down strike outside Norwich. Even so, their movement constituted a threat to the security of the state and was mercilessly put down by Somerset's rival in the council, John Dudley, earl of Warwick.

Northumberland's reactionary government

Somerset's rule could not survive two major rebellions in one year. He was overthrown in October 1549 and subsequently beheaded, his place being taken by Dudley who assumed the title of duke of Northumberland. After siding with the Catholics Northumberland now joined the extreme Protestants in order to despoil the Church. He ordered the destruction of service books, religious statues and paintings and went far towards depriving bishops of their secular power and property. The second Prayer Book of 1552 altered the communion service and simplified ceremonial so as to get away from the Catholic idea of the mass as a sacrifice. Henceforth the communion was to be celebrated on a table instead of an altar, ordinary bread was to be used and the celebrant was not to wear special vestments or make



Left: Mary Tudor as a princess.
 Centre: Queen Elizabeth I. This anonymous portrait was painted to commemorate her visit in 1592 to Sir Henry Lee at Ditchley, where her feet are resting.
 Far right: Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. (National Portrait Gallery, London.)

Mary Tudor (1553–58)

In 1553 Tudor England entered upon a second crisis. Having survived a minority it now had to overcome the predicament of being ruled by a thirty-seven-year-old Catholic spinster. The accession of Mary Tudor, Henry VIII's daughter by Catherine of Aragon, threatened the survival of both the Tudor dynasty and the English Reformation.

Mary was sincere, devout, kind and cultured but she lacked administrative experience and political skill. 'I know the queen', wrote the imperial ambassador, 'to be good, easily influenced, inexpert in worldly matters, and a novice all round. . . . To tell you between ourselves, I believe if God does not preserve her she will be lost'. In fact, Mary turned out to be a pathetic failure.

The queen aimed at restoring the old religion but first she had to secure her succession, for if she remained single the throne would eventually pass to her Protestant half-sister, Elizabeth, who would surely undo her work. The choice of a husband, however, was not easy. The chancellor, Stephen Gardiner, would have liked Mary to marry an English nobleman, but she accepted instead the future Philip II of Spain, thereby bringing her kingdom into the Habsburg orbit.

Mary's decision caused the Kentish rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyatt in 1554. Though he pretended to champion the Prayer Book, he was really opposed to the Spanish marriage. His revolt failed because the Londoners would not join it, and its chief result was the unjust execution of Lady Jane Grey and her husband.

The royal marriage was celebrated at Winchester on 25 July 1554. Philip tactfully agreed to stand down should Mary predecease him without leaving an heir and promised not to appoint Spaniards to important posts in England. Yet the marriage was unpopular, for Englishmen were no longer economically dependent on trade with the Spanish Netherlands and feared that the Spanish Inquisition might be introduced into their country.

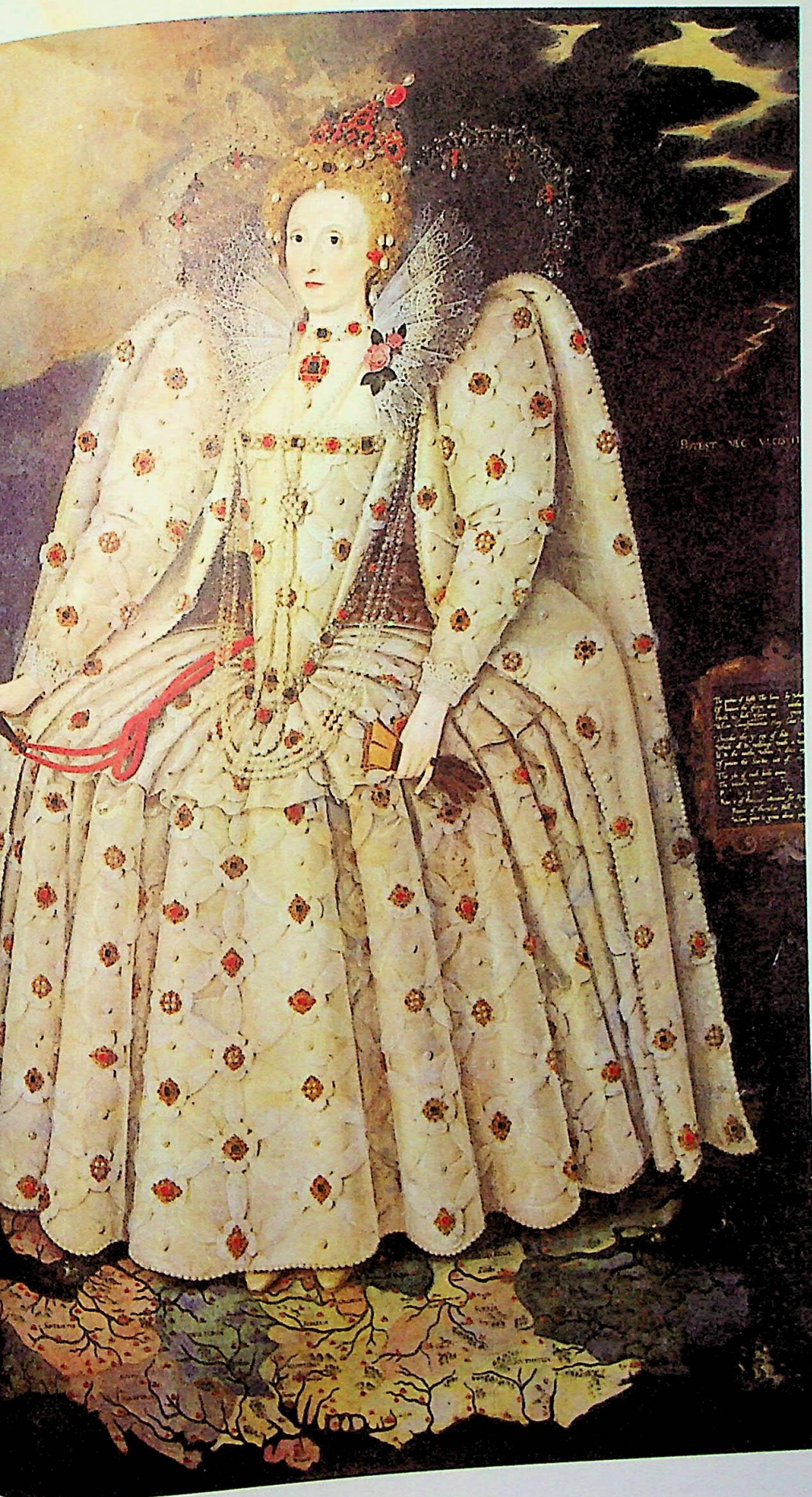
Originally Mary asked for nothing more than toleration for Catholics, but she soon began to revert to the religious position that had existed before the schism and Protestant extremists went into temporary exile on the continent. Edward VI's religious legislation was annulled by Parliament and the title of 'Supreme Head' in the royal style was replaced by a convenient 'etc.'

devotional gestures. The doctrine of the Real Presence was repudiated by Cranmer's Forty-two Articles in 1553.

If Northumberland's religious policy was radical, his economic and social policy was thoroughly reactionary. The Subsidy Act of 1548 was repealed and the Enclosure Commission allowed to lapse. To prevent social unrest the scope of treason was again enlarged, certain gentlemen were allowed to raise cavalry units at the public expense and the sheriff's military powers were transferred to a new official, the lord-lieutenant. Yet Northumberland's record was not wholly bad: he did try to reverse the debasement of the coinage and encouraged English overseas enterprise.

Northumberland's power depended on the survival of the young king, whose health

was precarious. If Mary Tudor, who was the duke's enemy and a Catholic, came to the throne he and his policy were doomed. So Northumberland bullied the king and his council into altering the succession in favour of his own daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey. But when Edward died, on 6 July 1553, Mary managed to give Northumberland the slip and the whole nation, including the royal council, rallied to her side. In a desperate bid to save his skin the duke proclaimed himself but his volte-face deceived no one. He was arrested and executed, while the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey, her husband and Cranmer were imprisoned in the Tower of London.



In November 1554 Cardinal Reginald Pole returned to England as papal legate. He absolved the nation of the spiritual penalties it had incurred by its schism and heresy and wisely refrained from demanding the restoration of Church lands that had been secularised. But the reversion to Catholicism was marred by a campaign of persecution without parallel in English history. Altogether some 300 people were burnt for their beliefs, mainly in south-east England. Most of them were humble folk, though Cranmer was among the victims.

In 1557 Mary allowed herself to be dragged into a war with France which resulted in the loss of Calais, England's last continental foothold. Such was the price of the Spanish marriage which had in any case proved barren. Sterility was the keynote of Mary's reign. She died, execrated by her subjects, on 17 November 1558.

Elizabeth I: The religious settlement

Little is known about Queen Elizabeth's religious convictions. She disliked theological pedantry and clerical marriage; otherwise she kept her beliefs very much to herself. As the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn she could hardly be expected to retain the papal supremacy, yet she had no wish to provoke her more conservative subjects by adopting extreme Protestantism. Her original intention was probably to win the Marian bishops over before proceeding to any change of doctrine, but this was not acceptable to certain Protestant hotheads in Parliament. They tried to force a complete Protestant programme on her and the result was a more extreme compromise than the queen had originally envisaged.

The Act of Supremacy of April 1559 restored the royal supremacy, while the Act of Uniformity, passed in the same month, imposed a new Prayer Book. The queen, because of her sex, was described as 'supreme governor' of the English Church not as supreme head. The new doctrine stood roughly halfway between the Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552. All the Marian bishops except one refused to take the Oath of Supremacy and were accordingly deprived, but a majority of the lesser clergy submitted. The settlement was rounded off by the adoption of the Thirty-nine Articles by Convocation in 1563. Like all compromises it failed to satisfy the extremists on both sides. The Puritan, John Field, described it as, 'a certain kind of religion, framed out of man's own brain and fantasy, far worse than that of popery (if worse may be), patched and pieced out of theirs and ours together'.

Elizabeth was probably wise not to throw in her lot with either the Catholics or the Protestants. By steering a middle course she united all moderate-minded Englishmen and avoided becoming intimately associated with the big religious power blocks on the continent.

Catholics and Puritans

In the first decade of Elizabeth's reign the Catholics were not troublesome. Many conformed outwardly to the settlement while continuing to worship in their own way. Philip II persuaded the pope not to excommunicate the queen as he needed England's friendship against France, the traditional enemy of Spain. But the Rebellion of the Northern Earls in 1569 created a false impression abroad that only a signal from Rome was needed to overthrow Elizabeth. Pius V, therefore, excommunicated her and all who continued to obey her. The Catholics were thus forced to choose between loyalty to the state and allegiance to their faith.

A number of young English Catholics went abroad where they were trained in special colleges at Douai, Valladolid, Rome and elsewhere as missionaries to rescue their homeland from heresy. They began to return in 1574 and operated secretly from country houses up and down the country. The first Jesuit mission led by Edmund Campion and Robert Persons arrived in 1580. The government reacted by means of penal legislation. The fine for recusancy was raised to twenty pounds a month and an intensive drive was launched against missionary priests. Campion was among those martyred. Yet Catholicism was able to make headway, for local officials were sometimes unwilling to enforce the penal laws. After 1588 Catholics were less fiercely persecuted, for they had remained quiet at the time of the Armada.

The extreme Protestants or Puritans were also a serious problem to Elizabeth. The

Presbyterians hoped to rebuild the Church on the Geneva model by getting rid of bishops and the royal supremacy, while the Separatists wanted freedom to worship outside the framework of a national Church.

Trouble began in 1559 when the Puritans objected to the survival of certain 'popish' practices, notably the use of vestments. Archbishop Parker campaigned vigorously against nonconformity among the clergy and emerged victorious from the Vestiarian controversy. Meanwhile Puritan members of Parliament put forward bills to reform the Church but were each time foiled by the queen.

About 1569 Puritanism assumed a more revolutionary aspect. By attacking the bishops Thomas Cartwright and John Field, to mention only two of the leaders, were indirectly threatening the queen's quasi-episcopal authority. In 1583 Archbishop Whitgift required all the clergy to subscribe to the royal supremacy, the Prayer Book and the Thirty-nine Articles under pain of deprivation. Largely as a result of his efforts,

Puritanism declined and was driven underground where it remained until its revival under James I.

The importance of Parliament

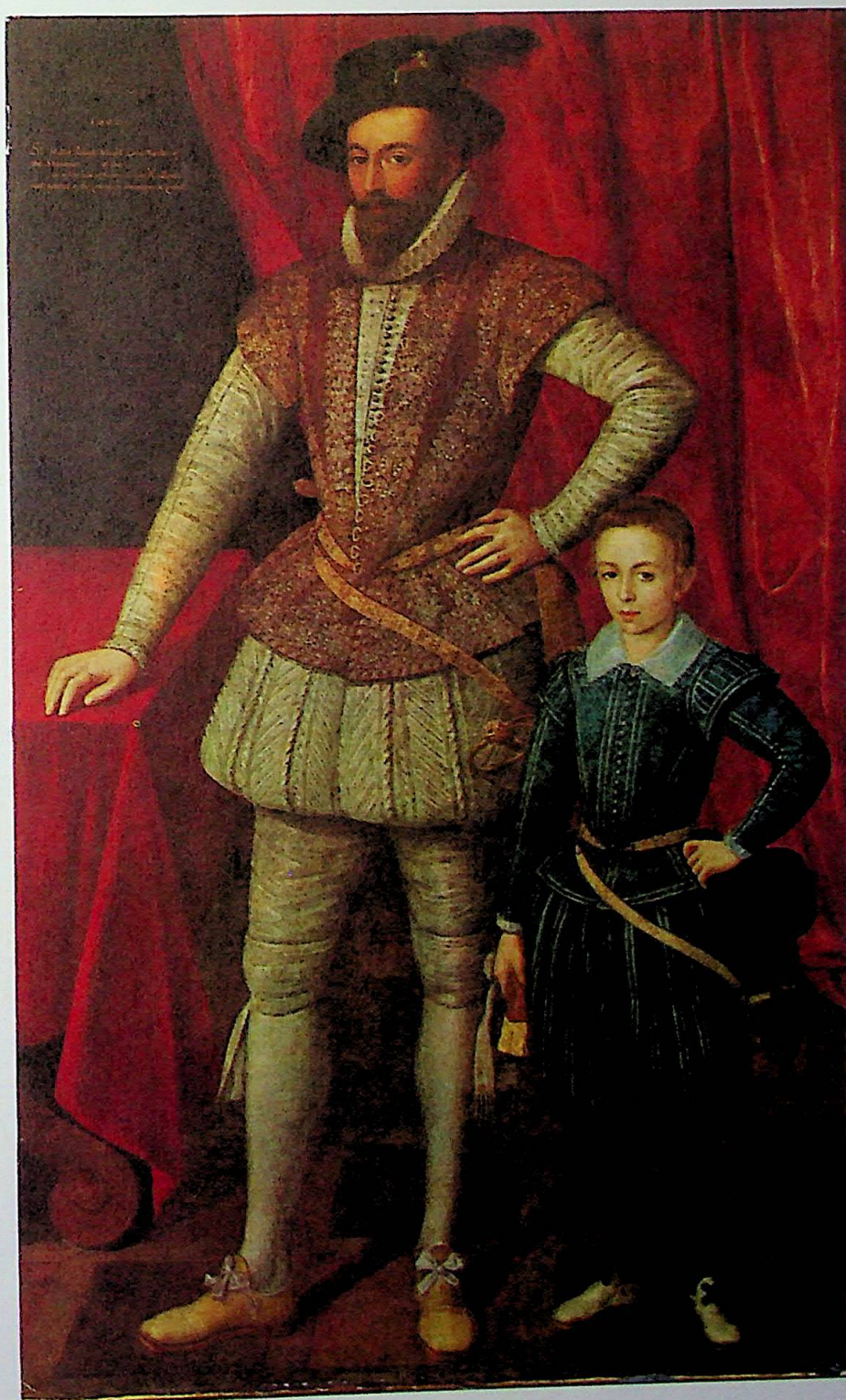
An important feature of Elizabeth's reign was the growing importance of the House of Commons where the country gentry were preponderantly represented. Even boroughs were represented by country gentlemen who usually owed their seats to the patronage of some great nobleman. Parliament enabled young gentlemen to go to London which was fast becoming the social centre of the kingdom.

The Tudor period saw an extension of parliamentary privilege, but as late as 1558 freedom of speech was not well defined. Some members claimed the right to discuss religion, the succession and foreign affairs, but the queen believed such matters should be raised only with her prior consent. In 1566 Paul Wentworth put three questions to the House which suggested that the queen's





Left: the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. As this cartoon for a tapestry indicates, the English ships were not smaller than the Spanish, as is often thought. (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.)
Below: one of Queen Elizabeth's favourites, Sir Walter Raleigh, and his son. (National Portrait Gallery, London.)



ban on any discussion of the succession amounted to a breach of privilege. Ten years later his brother, Peter, resumed the attack. He declared,

'In this house which is termed a place of free speech, there is nothing so necessary for the preservation of the prince and the state as free speech, and without, it is a scorn and mockery to call it a Parliament House, for in truth it is none, but a very school of flattery, and so a fit place to serve the devil and his angels in, and not to glorify God and the Commonwealth. . . .'

Parliamentary opposition to the crown, then, did not begin with the Stuarts, but under Elizabeth it was fundamentally loyal. What the members feared above all was that they would lose her and all that she stood for. The queen's feelings for her Commons were also tempered by affection. 'I think they speak out of zeal to their countries', she declared, 'and not out of spleen or malevolent affection. . . .'

Below: suit of armour made for the earl of Cumberland. (Victoria and Albert Museum, London.)

Below right: Mary Queen of Scots and her second husband, Darnley. (British Museum, London.)

The age of Drake

To many people the reign of Elizabeth I is above all the age of Drake.

Until the 1550s England showed little interest in exploration. The reasons for this apathy were economic and political. It exported its cloth to Antwerp and did not need to look for markets elsewhere; Spain controlled Antwerp and was England's natural ally against France. In the second half of the century this situation changed completely. The Antwerp market crashed and Englishmen had to find other outlets for their goods: France was crippled by its civil wars. Thus England was left free to encroach upon the Spanish colonial sphere which it had hitherto respected.

The primary motive of English overseas enterprise was commercial. Englishmen hoped to trade with Cathay (China), which was reputedly rich in gold and spices, but all the known routes to the Far East were closed to them. Their only course was to find a new route to the Far East in the northern

hemisphere. The attempt made by Hugh Willoughby and Richard Chancellor to find a north-east passage (1553) failed, but it did lead to the establishment of commercial relations with Russia. In 1576 Martin Frobisher claimed that he had found the north-west passage. He brought back an Eskimo and pieces of black ore said to contain gold. In fact he had only found a Canadian cul-de-sac and the ore turned out to be worthless. Yet the search for a north-west passage continued.

Privateering became important in the 1560s. With the deterioration of Anglo-Spanish relations, English captains began to see possibilities of gain by penetrating the Carribean. John Hawkins at first hoped to trade legally with the Spanish colonies but the disaster that befell him at San Juan de Ulua, when his fleet was almost destroyed by the Spaniards as it was refitting in the harbour, convinced him otherwise. Francis Drake then set out to inflict as much damage as possible on the Spaniards and in the course of his circumnavigation of the world (1577-80) he seized a considerable quantity of treasure.

Until the late 1560s Englishmen gave little thought to colonisation. It was suggested by Humphrey Gilbert in his *Discourse* (1566), and in 1585 the first English colony was founded at Roanoke, a low-lying island off the coast of modern North Carolina. Though it proved a failure, the experience gained paved the way for the foundation of Jamestown in the next century.



Chronological Charts

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

Germany	France and Switzerland	England and Scotland
Birth of Luther (1483)	Birth of Zwingli (1484)	Revival of Lollardy in England
1500		
The 95 Theses of Wittenberg (1517)	Birth of Calvin (1509)	
Diet of Worms. Luther placed under imperial ban (1521)	Zwingli, people's priest in Zürich (1518)	
The Peasants' War (1524-25)		Tyndale's New Testament (1526)
Diet of Speyer. The 'Protest' (1529)		
Colloquy of Marburg (1529)		Reformation Parliament (1529-36)
1530		
Diet and Confession of Augsburg (1530)		
Schmalkaldic League (1531)	Battle of Kappel and death of Zwingli (1531)	Surrender of the clergy (1532)
		Cranmer made archbishop of Canterbury (1533)
		Act in restraint of Appeals to Rome (1533)
Anabaptist rising in Münster (1534)	Affair of the Placards (1534)	
		Act of Supremacy (1535)
		Execution of More and Fisher (1535)
	Publication of Calvin's <i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i> (1536)	Dissolution of the monasteries (1536-39)
	Calvin at Geneva (1536-38)	Ten Articles (1536)
1540		
	Calvin returns to Geneva (1541)	
Death of Luther (1546)		
Battle of Mühlberg (1547)	Establishment of <i>La Chambre Ardente</i> in Paris (1547)	
'Interim' of Augsburg (1548)		First Book of Common Prayer (1549)
1550		
		Second Book of Common Prayer (1552)
	Execution of Servetus in Geneva (1553)	
Religious Peace of Augsburg (1555)		Marian persecution. Cranmer burnt (1555)
		John Knox in Scotland (1559)
		Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity (1559)
1560		
	Beginning of Religious Wars in France (1562)	
	Death of Calvin (1564)	

POLITICAL EVENTS

France	Spain and the Holy Roman Empire	England
Louis XII (1498-1515)	Maximilian (1493-1519)	Henry VII (1485-1509)
1500		Marriage of Arthur, prince of Wales, and Catherine of Aragon (1501) Death of Prince Arthur (1502) Death of Henry VII and accession of Henry VIII (1509) Marriage of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon (1509) Battle of the Spurs (1513) Battle of Flodden (1513)
French expelled from Italy (1513) Accession of Francis I (1515) Battle of Marignano (1515) Concordat with Leo X (1516)	Death of Ferdinand of Aragon (1516) Charles of Habsburg becomes king of Spain (1516) Revolt of the Comuneros Death of Maximilian (1519) Charles V elected Emperor (1519)	
1520		Henry VIII and Francis I meet at Field of the Cloth of Gold (1520)
French defeated at La Bicocca (1522) Treason of Charles of Bourbon (1523) Invasion of Provence (1524) Francis I defeated and captured at Pavia (1525) Peace of Madrid (1526) League of Cognac (1526)	War with France (1521) The Knights' War in Germany (1522) Conquest of Mexico completed (1522) Battle of Mohács (1526) Sack of Rome by imperial army (1527)	Suffolk invades France (1523)
Peace of Cambrai (1529)	Treaty of Barcelona (1529) Siege of Vienna by Turks (1529)	Henry VIII seeks annulment of his first marriage (1526) Fall of Cardinal Wolsey (1529)
1530	Charles V crowned emperor by Clement VII in Bologna (1530) Diet of Augsburg (1530) Ferdinand elected king of the Romans (1531) Conquest of Peru (1532)	Rise to power of Thomas Cromwell (1532) Henry VIII's first marriage annulled by Cranmer (1533) Anne Boleyn crowned queen (1533) Birth of Elizabeth I (1533)
Marriage of Catherine de' Medici with Henry of France (1533)	Tunis expedition (1535)	Pilgrimage of Grace (1536)
Third war between Francis I and Charles V (1536) Provence invaded by Charles V (1536) Truce of Nice (1538)	Revolt of Ghent (1539)	
1540	Expedition against Algiers (1541)	Fall of Thomas Cromwell (1540)
Fourth war between Francis I and Charles V (1542) Battle of Cerisole (1544) Peace of Crepy (1544)	Schmalkaldic War (1546) Battle of Mühlberg (1547)	Death of Henry VIII and accession of Edward VI (1547) Duke of Somerset protector (1547) Western Rebellion (1549) Ket's Rebellion in Norfolk (1549) Fall of the Protector Somerset and rule of Northumberland (1549)
Death of Francis I and accession of Henry II (1547)		
1550	Flight of Charles V before Maurice of Saxony (1522) Treaty of Passau (1552)	
Invasion of Lorraine by France and occupation of three bishoprics (1552) Siege of Metz (1552)	Peace of Augsburg (1555) Abdication of Charles V at Brussels (1555)	Death of Edward VI (1553) Proclamation of Lady Jane Grey (1553) Accession of Mary Tudor (1553) Rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyatt (1554) Marriage of Mary Tudor and Philip II of Spain (1554)
Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559) Death of Henry II and accession of Francis II (1559)		Loss of Calais (1558) Death of Mary Tudor and accession of Elizabeth I (1558)
1560	Tumult of Amboise (1560) Death of Francis II and accession of Charles IX (1560)	

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